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Seventy-sixth year

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Byrne Nason	(Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	Estonia	Mr. Jürgenson
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	India	Mr. Tirumurti
	Kenya	Mr. Kiboino
	Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Niger	Mr. Aougi
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. DeShong
	Tunisia	Mr. Ladeb
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield
	Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

Maintenancance of international peace and security

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Her Excellency Mrs. Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders; and His Excellency Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, Elder Emeritus.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following to participate in this meeting: Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, member of The Elders and former President of Liberia; and His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Zedillo, member of The Elders and former President of Mexico.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mrs. Robinson.

Mrs. Robinson: It is a privilege to brief members of the Security Council once again as Chair of The Elders, and I thank the Government of Ireland for inviting us to address the Council. I am honoured as well to be here together with my fellow Elders — Lakhdar Brahimi, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Ernesto Zedillo. Mr. Brahimi will focus particularly on Afghanistan, and I shall raise other issues of concern to The Elders.

First, however, I would like to share a memory of my visit to Afghanistan as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in early March 2002. I met with Sima Samar, then Minister of Women's Affairs, and Noeleen Heyzer, then Head of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, who had been helping about 95 women draw up their draft charter of women's rights. I was surprised to find that those women had been judges, lawyers, doctors and teachers who were active in their community before the Taliban.

They had decided to launch their charter on International Women's Day in the cinema they used to go to before the Taliban. It had been destroyed, but the women cleared about 15 feet of rubble, and the United Nations provided the canvas roof cover. The United Nations also guaranteed it would be safe, and the women therefore came without their burkas. On 8 March that

year, I recall looking down from the podium, together with Lakhdar, at the bearded men who had taken the seats in the first few rows.

We saw a woman further back stand, praise Allah and launch their charter. It was an important reminder that women's rights are not Western rights. They are fundamental human rights, which those Afghan women had reclaimed in accordance with their cultural values. In the almost 20 years since then, hard-won gains in gender equality and women's rights have been secured through constitutional, legislative and policy changes.

We cannot allow the women and girls of Afghanistan to be deprived of those rights, including the right to leave the country. Members of the Security Council cannot fail them. I was glad to see the letter that Ireland and Mexico, as co-Chairs of the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security, wrote to the Security Council in August, reminding the Council of its responsibility with in this regard. Resolution 2593 (2021), which was adopted on 30 August, is a good first step, but the Council must now go further. I call in particular on China and Russia, in their dealings with the Taliban, to encourage the Taliban to recognize that the participation of women in society and the education of girls on an equal basis with boys are non-negotiable and must be respected.

Collectively, members of the Council have all been entrusted with a powerful mandate to act on behalf of the United Nations as the primary international body charged with maintaining international peace and security. As all know, that places heavy responsibilities on all members of the Council to not only reflect the immediate national interests of their national capitals, but to also work collectively in the global interest. A united and purposeful Security Council is needed now more than ever.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has taken a heavy toll, first and foremost in human lives, but also economic growth, political momentum and social inequality. It has also demonstrated manifold failures of international cooperation. We must be proactive in learning from them and preparing for the next pandemic. The report of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Prevention and Response, entitled *COVID-19: Make It the Last Pandemic*, sets out a pathway for strengthening the multilateral architecture on pandemic prevention and response. The Elders have called on global leaders to make a political declaration at the general debate of

the General Assembly later this month to commit to implementing fully the report's recommendations.

The Elders are also alarmed about the existential dangers posed by nuclear weapons, as recent years have seen the breakdown of arms control agreements, the emergence of dangerous new technologies and cyberwarfare capabilities, and the serious risk of a new nuclear arms race taking hold among the nuclear Powers. We are also concerned about the failure to date to secure a new agreement between the United States and Iran on its nuclear programme. We reiterate our support for a full, unconditional return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be a critical moment for action. The non-nuclear-weapon States will be expecting the five recognized nuclear Powers to demonstrate concrete progress on their NPT commitments to pursue disarmament in good faith. Ensuring a successful review conference should be a top priority for the Security Council. We urge the Council to maintain the issue of nuclear weapons actively on its agenda. I am pleased that Ireland is organizing a Council meeting later this month to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. I urge the Council to use that opportunity to send a clear message of support for the Treaty's entry into force.

Urgency of action is equally needed on climate change, which is a threat multiplier to all the issues on the Council's agenda. The latest science from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has clearly shown the risks posed to planetary stability and human survival. While the Council has already started to grapple with climate change as a security threat, I hope it will now engage more decisively and with a resolution, as it is a core threat to international peace and security.

On the role of the Council in preventing and responding to violent conflict, I urge members to use the tools at their disposal. Article 34 of the Charter of the United Nations states:

"The Security Council may investigate any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute, in order to determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security."

That power of investigation should be used proactively by the Council to engage early in situations, before large-scale violence breaks out and hits the international media.

On Tigray, the protection of women and girls must be a top priority as the conflict continues to escalate. The Council has been briefed on the severity of the humanitarian crisis and food insecurity that is directly resulting from the conflict, as well as on the horrific scale of human rights atrocities, including the use of sexual violence against women and girls as a weapon of war. The Council must take action to incentivize the parties to negotiate a ceasefire. Ending the fighting is the only way to cease the suffering. The Council could also consider making a visit to Ethiopia and Tigray in order to focus attention on the conditions on the ground and the urgent need for a political — not military — solution.

A similar unity of purpose is needed on Myanmar, where, six months on from the military coup, the country remains in turmoil. The people of Myanmar do not want a return to military rule. The normalization and acceptance of an unlawful coup is not a route to regional stability. On the contrary, the military's extension of the state of emergency and the continued unlawful detention of the National League for Democracy's political leadership risk taking the country down a path of protracted civil conflict and cannot be tolerated.

The Council must support and strengthen, not hide behind, the role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which has so far been unable to progress the implementation of its five-point plan agreed in April. I note the reports that there may now be agreement by the military to a humanitarian ceasefire until the end of the year, following engagement by the new ASEAN Special Envoy, and urge all parties to seize that opportunity.

Common ground among Council members can be found now on the need for strong action to ensure a comprehensive United Nations response to COVID-19, which is devastating in Myanmar, and the humanitarian crisis. The United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy should also be empowered to work with the new ASEAN Special Envoy to find a political solution to the crisis through confidence-building and dialogue among all parties. Council members with influence on the Tatmadaw have a particular duty to encourage it to open up to the possibility of dialogue.

Finally, on Israel and Palestine, the latest cycle of violent conflict this year has shown beyond doubt the need for a fresh approach by the international community that addresses root causes and is based on respect for international law. The Council has failed to address persistent violations of resolution 2334 (2016), allowing the parties' actions to undermine prospects for peace and a two-State solution. The Council should reaffirm its commitment to the resolution's terms and take strong action to hold the parties accountable for violations. Member States should also encourage all parties to cooperate with the investigation by the International Criminal Court into the situation in Palestine as part of their commitment to the rules-based international system.

On many of the issues I have just discussed, I recognize that real and serious divisions exist between members of the Council and that internal political divisions have unfortunately led the Council to fall short of its responsibilities in many instances. Nevertheless, I urge all Council members to return to the fundamental basis for their mandate and to work tirelessly to find common ground and build consensus wherever possible. Every Council member should recognize that they have a common interest in upholding global peace, security and stability. That ought to be a guiding principle for the Council's work in the years ahead.

The President: I thank Mrs. Robinson for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Brahimi.

Mr. Brahimi: It is an honour for me to address the Security Council on behalf of The Elders for the second time.

On the first occasion, four years ago, I spoke mostly on Palestine (see S/PV.7977). Alas, things in that unhappy occupied country have not improved — quite the opposite. The occupying Power is responsible for what is now an overt apartheid situation. Its excessively harsh oppression and systematic dispossession of Palestinians has embarrassed even some of its unconditional supporters around the world.

The question of Palestine has been on the Council's agenda since soon after the United Nations came into existence, in 1945. Five years ago, the Council adopted resolution 2334 (2016) — a landmark decision that set out clearly the obligations of those responsible for addressing the key barriers to achieving peace, including the relentless ongoing settlement of occupied Palestinian

territory. Is it not high time to put an end to the failed policies that so unjustly betray the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and a life of dignity?

Mrs. Mary Robinson, our President, has eloquently and clearly set forth some of the key concerns and hopes of The Elders, including on Afghanistan. Now that it is my turn to say a few words, I shall speak only on Afghanistan, but I do not have enough time to say everything that needs to be said on the subject.

As of Sunday — the day before yesterday — the brave attempt of Mr. Amrullah Saleh, Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and Mr. Ahmad Massoud, son of legendary guerrilla leader the late Mr. Ahmad Shah Massoud, to resist in the Panjshir Valley was defeated. The Taliban now exercise practically sole control over the country's entire territory.

Afghanistan today is not the Afghanistan I knew in the late 1990s and from 2001 to early January 2004. I therefore do not claim to have any expertise or inside information — only a little experience and mainly deep feelings of sympathy, concern and respect for the great people of Afghanistan.

On human rights, there is little to add to what Mrs. Robinson forcefully said a moment ago. At the centre of the mandate and action of the United Nations in Afghanistan is the protection of the fundamental rights of all Afghans, especially the most vulnerable, namely, women and girls, the internally displaced, ethnic and religious minorities and human rights defenders, inter alia. To continue its work, the United Nations must have the Council's support. It will have to establish a system of cooperation with national and local authorities which, at present, means the Taliban.

To say that the humanitarian situation is dire would be an understatement, and needs are most urgent. Yet, the flow of aid has stopped abruptly and the inclination of donors is to abandon Afghanistan now that the Taliban has regained control of the country. The international community would like to resume its support for the people of Afghanistan but many, perhaps most, do not wish to deal with the Taliban and are not ready to grant immediate diplomatic recognition to the Government the Taliban is about to form.

On its side, the leadership of the Taliban does not seem to speak in a single voice. Some among them say they will return to the views and practices which were theirs when their regime was defeated following

11 September 2001. On the contrary, others say they shall respect and reach out to their opponents and try to form with them a genuinely inclusive Government.

In the meantime, the country's State institutions are paralysed and the people of Afghanistan are abandoned. Famine and despair look like an inescapable fatality for millions of men, women and children. What should be done? I do not claim to have the answer to that question but what I hear from young, bright Afghans, in and outside of Afghanistan, is that it is necessary and urgent to give peace a chance. As a first extremely urgent step, it is for the Secretary-General, acting with the full support of a united Security Council, to send a Special Representative to Kabul to start a frank discussion with the leadership of the Taliban.

At the same time, an urgent, important humanitarian programme needs to be put in place. The United Nations and its agencies and large non-governmental organizations in the country have the experience needed to implement such a programme. Their local staff is highly competent and dedicated. During the Taliban rule in the 1990s, the United Nations pulled out all its international staff, as it has done this time. The local staff stayed on the job and performed in a remarkable fashion. The Taliban did not interfere with them.

The United Nations should obtain a clear guarantee from the Taliban that, like last time, it shall not interfere with humanitarian operations — those of the United Nations itself and those of other international, humanitarian governmental and non-governmental organizations.

I am consciously encouraged by the recent report from Martin Griffiths, the United Nations humanitarian chief, that the Taliban has committed to guaranteeing the safety, security and freedom of movement of all humanitarian workers, men and women alike, and humanitarian access to people in need. The United Nations should hold the Taliban accountable for those commitments and ensure that that guarantee extends, not just to the staff of the United Nations, but also to the staff of humanitarian governmental and non-governmental organizations.

I understand that the Security Council will examine the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on 17 September. Circumstances in Afghanistan being what they are at present, UNAMA is needed more now than ever before. The Council should perhaps now limit its action to a technical rollover of a sufficiently long

period — let us say six months, for example — and take time to prepare the strong mandate UNAMA will need in the coming new phase.

I have the impression that the international parties involved in Afghanistan realize that boycotting the Taliban in the 1990s was not the best option. Kept in total isolation, the Taliban had a distorted image of the rest of the world. I sometimes wonder if Mullah Mohammed Omar, with whom I had three long meetings, would have allowed the destruction of the Giant Buddhas of Bamiyan had the movement and Government enjoyed full international recognition at the time. Likewise, would Osama Bin Laden have been given the opportunity and protection he needed to prepare and execute the attacks on 11 September if the Taliban had enjoyed international recognition?

Just as the United Nations and the international community are asking themselves those questions, so should the Taliban look back and ask itself questions. Its leaders and representatives are now received officially in regional and international capitals from Jakarta to Moscow and from Ankara to Beijing. The Taliban thinks that it now represents the overwhelming majority of the people of Afghanistan and that it governs on their behalf. In fact, it is no different from the authors of a coup d'état or a political party that won an election. Many of its compatriots do not support it. It must understand that the hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of Afghans, men and women, rushing to the Kabul airport or to the borders of each of their neighbours are but the tip of the iceberg — many more Afghans criticize the Taliban and do not welcome its rule.

I would like to conclude with a point that concerns not only Afghanistan, but a large number of other countries. Political Islam is now a reality in many Muslim majority countries, from Indonesia to Morocco. We see it in various shades and forms. It is important and urgent that the various religious, ideological and political families that live in our shared world learn how to put an end to mutual exclusion, and understand instead that it is necessary and beneficial for all if we accept living together in tolerance, mutual respect and cooperation.

The President: I thank Mr. Brahimi for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Aougi (Niger) (*spoke in French*): I would like to commend Mrs. Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders,

and Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, conflict mediator, for their briefings. I thank other members of The Elders for attending today's meeting.

The Security Council, whose primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security, must continue to recall the importance of the Charter of the United Nations, which furnishes it with its tools for action, and reaffirm its commitment to it. The Security Council must call for respect for and the implementation of its decisions, pursuant to Article 25 of the Charter, and ensure regular follow-up. More than ever before, we now know that the threats of nuclear proliferation and climate change are genuine, notwithstanding the diverging views among members of the Council on those issues. It is therefore important and necessary to discuss with and listen to all stakeholders and to use the tools of negotiation and dialogue to ensure peaceful dispute settlement among nations.

On the issue of nuclear weapons, my delegation would like to recall The Elders' view with regard to the need for Member States to comply with their four-D position — doctrine, defuse, deploy and decrease. Regarding the climate crisis that the world is currently experiencing, it should be recognized that it has a direct impact on security in such a way that talking about the link among climate, peace and security is inevitable given the various conflicts in the world caused by the impact of climate change, particularly in the Sahel region and the Lake Chad basin.

In view of those challenges, multilateralism should be promoted and strengthened in order to maintain peace and security, foster sustainable development, combat climate change, propose peaceful solutions to conflicts and promote post-conflict reconstruction. My delegation therefore calls on the international community to strengthen its commitment to multilateralism by placing the United Nations at the centre of its actions.

In that respect, we believe that it is important that the Secretary-General continue to properly fulfil his mandate under the Charter of the United Nations and to impartially uphold the Organization's values and moral authority. Engagement between the Secretary-General and other Member States, as well as with the members of the Security Council, is necessary and should continue. In that regard, the Secretary-General must always use his good offices to prevent the emergence, escalation and spread of international conflicts.

The Security Council must continue to act swiftly and effectively to adapt to non-traditional threats and rapid-onset crises, such as the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In that regard, the Council must make better use of resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2565 (2021), on COVID-19, by monitoring compliance with, and the effective implementation of, those resolutions by Member States and the other stakeholders. The pandemic has shown us the failure of the global health system and the need to help each other in a world where States are interdependent.

To that end, like some other States, my delegation calls for international solidarity in distributing vaccines, the global truce requested by the Secretary-General for humanitarian reasons and a strengthening of multilateralism with regard to health.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to encourage The Elders, who, given their extensive experience and influence, could serve as a reference point for the United Nations institutions, in general, and the Security Council, in particular. Their earlier messages and those of today show a strong sense of leadership and practical advice, which will clearly help us in our future decisions.

The Elders should engage with regional and subregional organizations and youth and civil society groups, which are also the Council's partners and counterparts, to discuss and share their experiences regarding climate change, nuclear proliferation, terrorism and other global phenomena related to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): Let me begin by thanking Their Excellencies Mrs. Mary Robinson and Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi for their briefings today. I also welcome Their Excellencies Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Mr. Ernesto Zedillo. The United Kingdom values The Elders' views on how the Security Council can play its part in improving multilateral responses to conflict prevention and evolving threats to international peace and security.

I would like to focus my intervention on three points: first, the Council's response to the evolution of threats to international peace and security; secondly, some country-specific examples of where the Council can have a real impact; and, finally, the importance of a system-wide approach to conflict prevention.

First, in the 76 years since the Security Council was entrusted with the responsibility to maintain international peace and security, the nature of the

threats that we face has evolved. How we respond to new challenges, including climate change and building back better from the coronavirus disease, will shape our world over the next decade and well beyond.

As the threats to international peace and security evolve, so too must the Security Council. We should not self-censor. Where there are clear emerging threats to international peace and security, we should consider them in a timely fashion. We should respond more quickly to the warning signs of conflict and violence and act earlier to prevent conflict and escalation. We should therefore be proactive in horizon-scanning and early warning instead of delaying until conflicts have already passed a tipping point.

Secondly, there are numerous ongoing crises where a more nimble, creative Security Council response would help people affected by conflict. Arguably, we did not act quickly enough to respond to the conflict in Tigray, but continued and constructive Council engagement can prevent further escalation by encouraging the parties to reach political solutions to the conflict. Such engagement would also support the efforts of the African Union. In that regard, I would welcome The Elders' views on how the Council can best support the work of His Excellency Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo as the African Union's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa.

Recent events in Afghanistan have also demonstrated just how vital it is for us to engage on conflict prevention and respond rapidly to changing situations on the ground. The multilateral system and clear, coordinated messaging across the international community, including from the Security Council, will be necessary to ensure that the Taliban's actions are consistent with its words. The adoption of resolution 2593 (2021) last week provides a strong foundation for the Council to continue to play its part in that vital undertaking.

The Security Council has been united in condemning violence and calling for the restoration of democracy in Myanmar. However, the situation continues to deteriorate. We welcome the appointment of His Excellency Dato Erywan Yusof as Special Envoy to Myanmar of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. It is critical that the Tatmadaw engage with him to make progress on the five-point consensus and address the humanitarian situation. In the Council, we should keep all options under review so as to remain engaged in support of a political solution.

Finally, the Council has primary responsibility for international peace and security but it cannot act alone. A coherent approach to conflict prevention requires action by the entire United Nations system, combining humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts and in coordination with regional organizations and partners. In that regard, the United Kingdom strongly supports the Secretary-General's commitment to embedding conflict prevention across the United Nations system and to delivering the sustaining peace agenda. By mobilizing all the tools at our collective disposal, we can build lasting, sustainable peace for all.

Ms. DeShong (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commends the Republic of Ireland for convening today's discussion, and we thank our esteemed Elders for sharing such keen insights, which are crucial to the maintenance of international peace and security. Their continued dedication to all humankind reinforces the work of the Security Council, and we pay them a great deal of gratitude for their unyielding commitment.

The complex web of interwoven peace and security challenges facing States today necessitate a reformed and effective multilateralism that prioritizes the collective good, protects our global commons and privileges the rights and perspectives of all nations and peoples.

In far too many contexts, a lack of access to basic public goods, including food and water, shelter and sanitation, education and health, and stable employment, leads to growing levels of inequality and disenfranchisement. A general reduction in public trust and protracted divisions along ethnic, communal and political lines subsequently ensue.

In fragile settings, such as conflict-affected and climate-vulnerable States, poverty and underdevelopment remain prevalent features etched across the social terrain. Those development challenges often manifest themselves as painful cycles of hostility and violence and spur devastating humanitarian crises. We can and we must do better to protect those made most vulnerable among us and to provide peace and justice to all, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The bedrock principles of international law outlined in the Charter of the United Nations compel all countries to work together to address global challenges with full respect for — and complete adherence to — the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States. Those tenets

are non-negotiable and must continue to serve as the centrepiece of all efforts to maintain international peace and security. National ownership over peace and political processes must be bolstered, social contracts rebuilt and earnest attempts at reconciliation pursued.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reiterates its calls for a comprehensive whole-of-system approach to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding activities. The Security Council should collaborate more closely with the other main organs of the United Nations system — the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — to fashion practical, gender-responsive, people-centred and climate-sensitive development strategies and deliver them to conflict-affected countries in line with their national needs and priorities.

Capacity-building initiatives should be accelerated as developed countries honour their overseas development assistance commitments; and ambitious targets for curbing emissions ought to be set and met by major polluters who in turn should provide increased support for climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives.

As the climate crisis deepens, the attendant security risks must be taken fully into account by the Council. Reparatory justice for past abuses — including historical injustices that left dreadful legacies of inequity and underdevelopment in their wake — must also form part of any serious agenda for lasting peace and security.

As we have borne witness throughout this pandemic, we can protect ourselves only by protecting each other. The question of global equitable access to safe and effective coronavirus disease vaccines remains one of paramount concern. So too is the need for all States to abandon unilateral practices, including economic sanctions and other extortionate measures, that impede efforts to recover sustainably from this pandemic.

Through the unity of purpose of the Security Council and the collective action of the wider international community — and further buttressed by the continued advocacy of The Elders and other committed stakeholders — a better future for all of humankind remains within our grasp. Let us work together with a renewed sense of hope, devotion and solidarity to provide peace, security and development to all who yearn for it.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I would also like to thank Ireland for arranging this important meeting. Let me also express my great appreciation to Mrs. Mary

Robinson and Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi for sharing from their vast experience.

Let me pick up on three key areas where Norway believes that the Security Council can do more in the years ahead.

First, the Security Council has a mandate to prevent conflict. Yet the Council often shies away from acting early, even when there are urgent warning signs. This is mainly due to political sensitivities and a wish by States to avoid Council attention with regard to their internal affairs. This is regrettable, because it reduces the ability of the Council to perform one of its most important roles. Efforts to avert conflict by peaceful means are by far the most effective way to reduce violent conflicts.

Tapping into available resources in the Secretariat and country teams, but also by drawing on partnerships with regional and subregional organizations and mechanisms for early warning and prevention, could be institutionalized, discreet and constructive. Initiatives such as the informal situational awareness briefings and fact-finding missions are positive and could be used actively by the Council to engage before conflicts erupt. Experience shows that transitions pose a risk and need attention to prevent conflicts from re-erupting. They demand a coordinated whole-of-United Nations approach in close collaboration with host States.

Secondly, inclusion is key for lasting outcomes. Peace processes that include civil society, particularly women's organizations, peacebuilders, human rights defenders and victims, achieve greater ownership and legitimacy. We must continue to insist on the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of United Nations peace and security efforts and to address the gap between that goal and realities on the ground.

As we have learned today, women in Afghanistan face extreme uncertainty. While some in the Taliban leadership have stated that women may return to work and girls to school, other Taliban leaders are saying that such issues are yet to be decided. Amid that uncertainty, we see that rightful humanitarian access is hindered when women humanitarian workers are unable to safely do their jobs and reach women and girls in need. The international community will not be able to help Afghanistan sufficiently and sufficiently respond to the deteriorating humanitarian situation if women are not able to provide or receive humanitarian assistance and services. We must all be crystal clear that there is no solution to the humanitarian situation without

women humanitarian workers; there is no sustainable development without women in the work force; and there is not sustainable peace without women being part of a political solution.

Another important lesson from Norway's experience in peacebuilding is to be willing to talk to all actors in a conflict. Engaging actors that others have deemed off limits can be essential to reaching political solutions. To Norway, that was evident in the Middle East peace process, where the Palestine Liberation Organization was involved at an early stage. The same approach has been important in many other efforts. Norway has had contact with the Taliban, for instance, since 2007.

When armed conflict erupts, ensuring the protection of civilians affected by the conflict is crucial in laying the foundations for sustainable peace. It is important that the Council remind the parties to the conflict of their international legal obligations. Where necessary, it is also important that the Council take measures, within its mandate, with the aim of ensuring that parties to conflict fulfil their obligations in that regard. We fully concur with The Elders when they point out that sustainable peace will be reached only when root causes of conflict are tackled, impunity is challenged and human rights take centre stage.

Thirdly, the Security Council has a responsibility to adapt to changing circumstances and develop new ways of responding to non-traditional threats to international peace and security. The Security Council has already recognized that the effects of climate change constitute a risk to global peace and security. This is also a matter of conflict prevention.

From Kabul to Tigray, from the outer atmosphere to the depths of our oceans, the world is facing many multi-faceted challenges. They can be solved only through multilateral cooperation, and the Security Council has a pivotal role to play. Often, the focus is on what the Council cannot achieve. However, this year the Security Council has adopted a range of unanimous resolutions, ranging from coronavirus disease response, renewed mandates for peace operations and prolonging the cross-border humanitarian aid mechanism to Syria. We are generally encouraged by the unanimity and should continue to build on that productive work.

Mr. Tirumurti (India): At the outset, I would like to thank the Irish presidency for having convened this important briefing with The Elders on "Maintenance of international peace and security". I thank Her Excellency

Mrs. Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders, and His Excellency Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, Elder Emeritus, for their valuable insights. I also acknowledge the presence of Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia and His Excellency President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico at today's meeting. It is indeed a privilege to hear from The Elders, who are well-known proponents of peace and admired across the world for their extraordinary work in promoting peace.

The United Nations was established to save "succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations refers to collective measures to maintain international peace and security, which include actions mentioned in Chapter VI and Chapter VIII of the Charter. Thus the United Nations Charter has prescribed a trigger mechanism for collective action by the Council. Action by the Council is not the first step but the last, after exhausting all options. At the same time, another important principle is that of non-intrusion into the domestic affairs of Member States. The challenge is to balance those important articles of faith when initiating action by the Council.

The Security Council, by the very nature of its composition, has its inherent constraints. While the United Nations was principally founded on the basis of the sovereign equality of nations, nowhere else is this principle more belied than in its principal organ of the Security Council. More than seven and a half decades after its inception, that structural inequality continues.

At the same time, we have seen and continue to witness the distressing consequences of interventions made without allowing for mediation efforts, especially regional mediation efforts. We therefore need to draw the right lessons from history, and calls for preventive diplomacy should be seen in those contexts.

In recent years, efforts have been made to bring thematic issues into the Council by projecting them as peace and security issues. While some of them are extremely important and timely, such as, for example, the women and peace and security agenda, we should be equally careful that instead of reforming the other United Nations organs, we are arrogating to ourselves some of their responsibilities.

In that context, I have the following five observations to offer.

Many of the problems relating to Security Council decisions stem from one important fact: that the Security Council is not truly representative of the contemporary

world. As Prime Minister Modi said in his address to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session last year (see A/75/PV.12), reform in the responses, in the processes and in the character of the United Nations is the need of the hour.

The world today is significantly different from that of 1945, and if Member States are to truly believe in the impartiality of the Security Council, it must take decisions based on certain impartial yardsticks. The Council has to be representative of the current realities to be credible, legitimate and effective. Consequently, when considering preventive diplomacy, either *suo moto* or through the recommendation of the Secretary-General, Member States have to be convinced that the decision taken by the Council is impartial and carefully considered and is not just a political tool. Only then will preventive diplomacy be effective or even accepted by all Member States.

Secondly, the United Nations has several principal organs, with clearly defined roles and functions. Issues of social and economic significance are to be primarily dealt with by the General Assembly, not the Security Council. We need to, where necessary, reform the other organs to make them more effective and also promote cooperative functionalism between the principal organs of the United Nations. The tendency to burden the Council with an increasing number of global challenges premised on their perceived connection to threats to peace and security will be self-defeating.

Thirdly, the world continues to be confronted with peace and security challenges, exacerbated by the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Contemporary security challenges are not limited to territorial or political disputes but transcend physical or political boundaries. To address new and emerging challenges, we need coordinated and concerted action across borders. In that regard, strengthening partnerships and enhancing linkages between the United Nations and regional organizations is absolutely critical. With their deep knowledge of local factors and complexities, regional and subregional organizations are uniquely placed to contribute to finding better solutions to conflicts in their respective regions. We have seen situations where the Council's decisions are at variance with how regional groups decide.

Fourthly, the continuing acts of terrorism and the expansion of terrorist groups continue to pose serious challenges to the maintenance of international peace and security. India's Minister for External Affairs,

Mr. Jaishankar, in his address to the Council earlier this year (see S/2021/48), presented eight principles of counter-terrorism. The Council needs to have zero tolerance for non-State terror actors and their sponsors. Equally important is to end the stalemate and expeditiously adopt a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Fifthly, regarding the implementation of resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2565 (2021), we need to be clear that those resolutions are context-specific and limited to addressing the challenges related to COVID-19 vaccines in conflict-affected regions. Vaccination is the best hope for humankind to emerge successfully from the pandemic. India has shared its experiences, expertise and resources with the global community in this collective battle.

The year 2021 has been a defining moment in the history of the world. We remain committed to upholding the rules-based international order, underpinned by international law and premised upon respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all Member States, the resolution of international disputes through peaceful negotiations, and free and open access for all to the global commons.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank you, Madam President, for hosting this important discussion today, and I thank President Robinson and Foreign Minister Brahimi for their briefings. I also welcome President Johnson-Sirleaf and President Zedillo to our discussion today.

The work of The Elders to resolve and prevent conflict is as urgent now as ever. The experience, the guidance, the sage advice, the respect that they bring are appreciated by the Council and by the world. Eight decades ago we came together to, in the words of the Charter of the United Nations, "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and "reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights". Nothing like this had ever succeeded before on this scale in the course of human history. There was every reason to believe that we might fail to unite, and yet, beginning with the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and building from there, we exchanged "might makes right" for a new set of self-binding principles — principles that steered us to prevent conflict, alleviate human suffering, defend human rights and engage in an ongoing dialogue to improve the lives of all people.

The results are undeniable. Since the foundation of the United Nations, there have been fewer large-scale conflicts than at any point in history. We have advanced global non-proliferation and prevented nuclear war. We have enshrined human rights protections and established them as foundational tenets of international law, and we have promoted sustainable development, provided life-saving humanitarian aid, and worked to improve the lives of people around the world.

The Security Council has operated at the very centre of that work. We know as well as anyone how imperfect this body can be, but it is among the best tools we have to confront the great challenges before us. And right now, we are seized of a range of global threats that know no boundaries. Today I will focus on three of the most pertinent: the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the climate crisis and the global erosion of human rights. All three were mentioned by President Robinson in her statement.

The COVID-19 pandemic has spared no nation. It has stressed our global health systems, destabilized economies and killed more than 4 million people around the world, including more than 600,000 Americans. And as we all know, the impacts go beyond the disease itself. Economies have suffered; instability has spread; gender-based violence has spiked; and millions of children, especially young girls, have been forced to stay home from school, and far too many may not return. More girls have been pressed into forced marriages. Childhood pregnancies have increased, and a high degree of prevalence of HIV/AIDS among young girls has occurred. We need to stop this virus, and we need to stop it now.

For our part, President Biden has committed the United States to serving as the arsenal of vaccinations. We have already donated more than 126 million doses of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines to countries around the world, and in particular to low- to middle-income countries and the African Union. We have provided these vaccines with no strings attached, and we have provided more than all other countries combined, with many more doses to come. In addition, we are advancing major initiatives in partnership with many other Security Council members to expand vaccine production, improve access to vaccines and life-saving treatments and strengthen health-care systems.

We believe that the Security Council itself has a key role to play in the COVID-19 response. We have already adopted resolutions calling for a global ceasefire

(resolution 2532 (2020)) and for greater cooperation to bring vaccines to conflict areas (resolution 2565 (2021)), and we need to speak out in cases where these resolutions need to be implemented, such as in Burma, where continued violence is crippling the pandemic response.

Like the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis threatens all of us too. In the United States, just in the past few weeks, we have experienced extreme wildfires in California, devastating hurricanes in my own home state of Louisiana, and dangerous floods here in New York, in our neighbourhoods. Of course, we are far from alone. The world is experiencing monsoons and droughts, rising sea levels and toxic air pollution. Climate change is a challenge for every person in every nation on every continent, which is why at President Biden's summit on climate, he advanced efforts to tackle the climate crisis. He announced our target to reduce emissions by 50 per cent below the 2005 levels by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Together we need to do everything we can to keep the goal of the 1.5°C limit on global average temperature rise within reach.

The impacts of climate change also pose a threat to peace and security. At its current pace, the climate crisis is set to drive millions from their homes, and many of the world most fragile States and regions are the most vulnerable to climate calamity. In the Security Council, we are delighted to have joined earlier this year the Group of Friends on Climate and Security and have been working with other like-minded nations toward highlighting the security implications of the climate crisis.

Finally, I want to talk about human rights. From the first sentence of the United Nations Charter, the foundational unit of the United Nations is not just the nation State, but it is also the human "State". Universal human rights are core to the Organization's project, but too often our inalienable rights are seen as optional aspirations. Systemic racism, regular targeting of the LGBTQIA+ community and persistent discrimination against religious minorities, people with disabilities and women and girls continue in every country around the world. The United States is committed to meeting our human rights obligations and ending discrimination in all its forms. To that end, in July, the United States announced its intent to issue a formal standing invitation to all United Nations experts who report and advise on thematic human rights. Looking globally, we are just as committed to advancing human rights abroad — from Afghanistan to Ethiopia to Yemen. Most recently, the

Security Council reaffirmed that the human rights of all Afghans, including women and girls and members of minority groups, must be upheld (resolution 2593 (2021)). Only through promoting the rights of the Afghan people can we lay the groundwork for a stable, secure and inclusive Afghanistan at peace with itself. We support efforts by The Elders to advise on Ethiopia, and we support the appointment of President Obasanjo as a special envoy for the Horn of Africa.

Some countries, including some members of the Security Council or those that seek to be on the Security Council, believe human rights are optional. They are not. This dangerous notion flies in the face of the self-binding principles that serve as the bedrock for the United Nations. Any efforts to rollback human rights protections in the Security Council, including efforts to limit human rights monitoring and reporting, will be met with the strongest possible opposition from us.

As we do this work of protecting human rights, stopping the pandemic and fighting the climate crisis, we welcome the wisdom and the guidance of The Elders. Their contributions are invaluable. As we face the great challenges of our times, we can use all the help we can get from The Elders to rally the Security Council and the United Nations towards a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the briefings by the representatives of The Elders at today's Security Council meeting. No one can doubt the need to strengthen the multilateral foundations of international relations or the importance of protecting and developing them at the world's central global negotiating platform, namely, the United Nations, and particularly its Security Council. We listened very closely to their assessments. They are interesting because, in their time, the briefers also had the opportunity to work on the tasks facing the United Nations. Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, Elder Emeritus, made a contribution to resolving complex crises in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, and to developing new approaches in the sphere of United Nations peacekeeping. Mrs. Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders, is a recognized guide in the promotion of human rights in her homeland and around the world. We note her principled stand on many issues. We also welcome the presence in the Chamber today of the other representatives of The Elders, Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and President Ernesto Zedillo.

The present system of international relations is going through a period of deep-rooted transformation. A multipolar world order is being established. In global and regional affairs, new centres of economic development are raising their profile. This is an objective trend.

At the same time, we have to note that, of late, instead of establishing equal cooperation, we have seen attempts to artificially divide countries by rank into those that are allegedly behaving correctly and those that are breaking the rules. At the same time, the advocates of the so-called rules-based order often fail to explain what specifically these rules are and why they are necessary, given that we already have instruments of international law, including, first and foremost, the United Nations Charter, which sets forth clear obligations for States. w

We see in such actions an effort to monopolize the formulation of important decisions for the international community and a desire to impose on everyone else their vision of the further development of international relations.

Even more regrettable are the attempts to present the ideology developed by a group of specific States as a guiding compass for all humankind. These values are then promoted as a counterweight to any other ideas about the world order or the make-up of other sovereign States. Those that do not agree face sanctions or even the use of force. This sort of patronizing approach serves only to further divide the international community. Moreover, as practice has shown, it leads neither to resolving urgent issues that affect all States without exception nor to settling conflicts, many of which have lasted for decades and resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives.

We firmly believe that genuine multilateralism is based on mutually respectful and equal cooperation among all States, built upon a de-politicized foundation free of ideology. That is the only way to strengthen mutual trust, improve the international relations environment and ensure the predictability of humankind's development in the face of global challenges. In our opinion, focusing on judging whose values are better or worse is unproductive. We should simply acknowledge the existence of other values, accept them for what they are and take them into account.

Decisions will be more robust and viable if they are developed by everyone on whom their implementation depends. In that regard, we must strive to pool our efforts and achieve the broadest possible agreement. The

United Nations, the General Assembly and the Security Council are universal platforms that are genuinely multilateral. Their authority is recognized by all. We believe that the solution to many of today's problems lies in strengthening their central role in international affairs, rather than seeking alternatives.

In taking into account the division of labour enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council plays a singular role in dealing with matters of international peace and security. We are convinced that, despite the breadth of its agenda, issues related to conflict resolution should always remain at the core of the Council's deliberations. It is well known that we are cautious about bringing items before the Council that are only indirectly related to its core mandate and could be addressed more appropriately within other United Nations forums.

We believe that Council decisions must always take into account the principles of non-intervention and the sovereign equality of States enshrined in the Charter. Using the Council against legitimate Governments that have found disfavour with others is unacceptable. The experience of recent decades has repeatedly demonstrated that such steps have never brought about peace or prosperity to people.

In conclusion, we urge our fellow Council members to always strive to reach solutions that strike a mutually acceptable balance, while considering one another's interests. That is simply imperative if we are to overcome the crisis of confidence that is apparent to everyone. For our part, we affirm that Russia is committed to open, honest and equitable dialogue and readiness to seek common ground.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I thank the briefers — President Mary Robinson and Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi — for their insights.

The United Nations was created with the future in mind. The Charter of the United Nations established a system of values, legal principles and political tools to maintain international peace and security and promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. The same values and legal principles agreed upon 76 years ago remain just as valid today.

The past two years have been very challenging for the world. The pandemic has interrupted our lives, sometimes dividing us on topics on which we have been most in need of unity. The pandemic has highlighted how the Security Council must keep up with the time

and continue to evolve. From mid-March 2020 to the end of May 2021, the Security Council worked mostly virtually. We managed to work through the most trying times of the pandemic, adopt resolutions and other products, doing our best to deal with conflicts around the globe.

We remain worried at seeing the deteriorating human rights situation around the world, most notably in Tigray, Belarus and Afghanistan. It remains our task to uphold the Charter and promote and encourage respect for human rights, while holding the perpetrators accountable. I would be glad to hear the briefers share their ideas on how we as a Council could better help the people in Tigray.

The main purpose of the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security. When bombs have already exploded and people have lost lives, it is already too late for us. Prevention and preparedness are the key, instead of dealing with the consequences. There is an abundance of information for us to act upon. We must be able to find common ground quicker than before. It can save lives.

In order to remain relevant and fulfil its responsibility in upholding international peace and security, the Security Council needs to address new and emerging security threats. The world is changing, and the Security Council must change with it. Over the past years, we have seen how malicious cyberactivities targeting oil infrastructure and the food and health-care sectors — our most basic and critical services — can pose a real and tangible threat. The humanitarian effects of tampering with critical infrastructure could be devastating.

As the threats emanating from the malicious use of cyberspace have become more apparent and wide-ranging, there is a clear need that States should implement the framework of responsible State behaviour and comply with international law. In June, during the Estonian presidency of the Security Council, the Council held its very first open debate dedicated to maintaining peace and security in cyberspace (see S/2021/621), and it is important that the Council remain seized of the matter.

Lastly, multilateralism and the advancement of international law are indispensable to tackling emerging global threats. Multilateralism can function in a meaningful fashion only within a rules-based international order. Strong leadership, backed by the collective decisions of the United Nations, including here in the Security Council, is needed to ensure that we

stand up to take on this task. We agree with the Secretary-General that multilateralism must be more inclusive and more networked and place human rights at its core. In order for that to happen, we also need to protect and assist in the creation of a safe and diverse civil society space, which is vital for resilient communities.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders, and Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi for their briefings. I welcome the presence of former Presidents Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Ernesto Zedillo among us.

The maintenance of international peace and security is the primary responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter of the United Nations. The international security landscape today is fraught with challenges and the complexity of both traditional and non-traditional security issues. The ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has exacerbated uncertainty and instability with regard to peace and security.

In order to achieve lasting peace and universal security while faced by these global challenges, it is imperative to uphold genuine multilateralism and translate it into practice. Our shared priority remains combating the pandemic in unity and solidarity. COVID-19 is not just a threat to the entire human race that puts our lives and individual and public health in jeopardy; it also has the potential to enable and accelerate the breeding of terrorism and extremism.

Universal vaccine access is a touchstone of the effectiveness of multilateralism. Today, vaccines are very hard to come by in many developing countries, while some developed countries are still hoarding them in much greater numbers than they need. Those vaccines are left sitting in storage as their expiry dates lapse. China calls on those countries to put an end to vaccine nationalism and to contribute to global vaccine access and equitable distribution in a tangible way.

Pushing for the political settlement of regional hotspot issues is the core mandate of the Security Council. Many such issues on the Council's agenda are at a critical stage and it is imperative that we resort to genuine multilateralism; respect the sovereignty and independence of all countries and the development path chosen by their peoples of their own free will; and promote, through good offices and mediation, dialogue and consultation among the parties to overcome their differences. Circumventing the Security Council to

impose unilateral coercive measures has no basis in law, defies reason and is an affront to common decency.

The way the situation in Afghanistan has transpired recently is proof that foreign military intervention and the imposition of a so-called democratic transformation programme does nothing to help solve any issues, instead creating more problems with failure as the inevitable outcome. The frantic and disorganized withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan by the countries concerned has plunged Kabul into chaos and upheaval. It has created a major humanitarian disaster and left the Afghan people to pick up the many pieces. We urge the countries concerned to honour their commitment to the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan rather than pass the buck to its neighbours and the wider international community.

In the face of terrorism, climate change and other non-traditional security threats, the international community must uphold genuine multilateralism, strengthen coordination and work together to address those challenges. Twenty years after the attacks of 11 September, the threat of terrorism facing the international community has not been eliminated for good. Combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestation remains the common responsibility of the international community. Double standards and selective counter-terrorism are the dominant forms of interference in international counter-terrorism cooperation. We must reject and refuse such interference.

Climate change is an existential threat to our collective survival and development. The international community has forged important consensus on principles such as common but differentiated responsibilities, equity and respective capabilities, as well as developing important frameworks for cooperation such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It remains for us to work together to translate that consensus into action. Developed countries in particular must effectively fulfil their commitments and help developing countries to meet the challenges they face in terms of financing, technology and capacity-building.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the restoration of the lawful seat of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations. In the five decades since, China has supported and practised real multilateralism, lending consistent, sustained and dependable support to the United Nations. Going forward, we have the confidence and the ability to make even greater

contributions to the maintenance of global peace and security.

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): I commend Ireland for convening this meeting and I sincerely thank our briefers, Mrs. Mary Robinson and Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. At the same time, we welcome the former President of Liberia, Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, and the former President of Mexico, Mr. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce.

It is indeed a great honour to have this opportunity to listen to the views and perspectives from the individual and collective wisdom of The Elders, particularly in our increasingly interwoven and fragile world. In his inaugural speech of 18 July 2007, which launched the formation of that eminent group of leaders, President Nelson Mandela noted that the core responsibility of The Elders is to analyse problems, seek solutions, search out partners and infuse “new energy where others have become weary”. The Elders’ experience, based on decades of raising awareness and dealing with global challenges to peace and security both publicly and through private diplomacy brings a much-needed vantage point to this platform.

For years, the Council has been considering situations where decisions have to be urgently and strategically made regarding the long-standing and emerging international security issues on its agenda. Yet never, especially in recent years, have effective multilateral solutions and affirmation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations been so sorely needed as they are today. That is why Kenya appreciates the important role of The Elders.

The global challenges with implications for international peace and security are many and well known to all of us. I will seek the insights of The Elders, time allowing, on how the Security Council can respond effectively to three threats, some of which have already been mentioned by the Chair of The Elders in her briefing.

First, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has dramatically showcased the interconnectedness of our world. It has exposed State vulnerabilities, revealed stark inequalities within our societies and unveiled latent weaknesses within international institutions. Back in 2014, we saw quick and determined efforts by both the Security Council and the General Assembly to deal with the Ebola crisis. However, it took three months for the Council to agree on resolution 2532 (2020) to support the Secretary-General’s call for a

global ceasefire in the context of united efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

In that regard, how best can the Council engage and implement recommendations in resolution 2532 (2020) and resolution 2565 (2021) to support calls for increased global solidarity and cooperation in vaccine rollouts, to address misinformation and disinformation and to prepare for the next pandemic, especially in fragile and conflict-affected countries?

For the world as a whole, is there room, in The Elders’ estimations, for an international treaty to frame rules, norms and principles to guide the multilateral system through pandemics, recognizing that pandemics also have implications for the sustainability of global peace and development?

Secondly, there is an urgent need for multilateral consensus around the nexus between international peace and security and climate change. It is no longer tenable, in our view, to underestimate the devastating effects of climate change as both an underlying cause and a multiplier of conflicts and insecurity globally. I would therefore like to hear from The Elders on what innovative approaches are necessary for the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular to engage with the level of seriousness needed to address the impact of the climate crisis in Africa, small island States and the world over.

Thirdly, even as we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1373 (2001), terrorism and violent extremism remain existential threats to international peace and security. It would seem that as battles are being won, political struggles are, at the same time, being lost. Goals that once seemed attainable in addressing the threat of violent extremism and terrorism are seemingly out of immediate reach.

Kenya has persistently called for the listing, without exception, of acknowledged terrorist groups, such as Al-Shabaab, under the Council’s sanctions regimes, including resolution 1267 (1999). From the assessment of The Elders, how should the multilateral system reconfigure itself, in terms of preparedness and the response to the intractable threat of terrorism? How can multilateral approaches be better utilized to mitigate against opportunities on which terrorist and militant groups increasingly capitalize to reinvigorate globally?

As I conclude, I note that today’s useful engagement with The Elders is a sober reminder of the need for Governments to take responsibility and for the

international community to decide how best to empower multilateral institutions, including the United Nations, to lead global responses to present and future crises. Nothing less than a stronger, agile and robust rules-based multilateral system will be able to rise to the task.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's session. I thank the former President of Ireland, Mrs. Robinson, and the former Foreign Minister of Algeria, Mr. Brahimi, for their remarks.

We also warmly welcome former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, and former President of Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo, to the Council.

Mexico thanks The Elders for sharing their experience and wisdom in the quest for solutions to the major issues plaguing the international community. I must say that in the millennial culture of my country, older people are often acknowledged for their wisdom and the popular advice is that they should be listened to.

I will limit my statement to three areas, which my delegation deems to be important for the Council, and to a brief word on the need to strengthen multilateralism to ensure that it is more effective.

First, with regard to human rights, democracy and gender equality, the Council must not only support the efforts of the international community; it must also prevent any rollback of achievements already made. We must therefore support actions that foster a return to democracy in Myanmar and not allow the progress made in Afghanistan to be overturned. As we have stated, together with Ireland, as co-Chairs of the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security, the Security Council must remain united so as to reject any threat to the rights of Afghan women and girls, and stress the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in any new Afghan Government.

Secondly, disarmament remains an issue that affects the fate of humankind. The former Secretary-General and member of The Elders, Ban Ki-moon, rightly stated that there are no right hands for the wrong weapons. That is precisely the premise of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Security Council must support multilateral processes, such as the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction. As Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), Mexico will strive

to ensure that during the next comprehensive review, measures are strengthened to prevent non-State actors from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction. We hope to be able to count on the support of delegations.

The Security Council must pay greater attention to the threat posed by small arms and light weapons. That is why, during Mexico's presidency of the Council, we will propose an analysis of measures to restrict the irresponsible transfer of such weapons, which stoke conflicts wherever they occur. It would be very valuable to hear any recommendations The Elders may have on that point in particular.

Thirdly, it is undeniable that climate change, as with nuclear weapons, is a threat to the very survival of humankind. It is also irrefutable that climate change can exacerbate existing conflicts. We see that in regions, such as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean. The recent passage of Tropical Storm Grace in Haiti compounded the impact of the earthquake that hit the sisterly nation amid its ongoing political challenges. Countries such as Haiti and other small island developing States deserve greater attention from the Council.

Allow me to conclude by referring to a necessary precondition to address the challenges that I mentioned, as well as other challenges that have been mentioned here today, which are a constant concern to us. How can we make multilateralism more effective? There have been numerous occasions when the Council has not been up to the task of fulfilling its mandate under the Charter of the United Nations. Its slow response to the pandemic is an example. There are those who continue to believe that pandemics are not a matter of international security. When such views prevail — through the misnamed right to veto, which is more than a right, but rather a delicate responsibility — there is an increased risk of the Council becoming an irrelevant organ. Paralyzing the Council during major crises undermines its authority and relevance.

It is paradoxical that, at national level, the majority of States believe that decisions should be taken by a simple or qualified majority, depending on the case. In the Council, however, if just one of the five permanent members so decides, it is possible to hamstring the will not only of the majority of the members of the Council, but of the international community. As has already been said here, the environment that prevailed 76 years ago does not match that of 2021. Therefore, we again call on the permanent members of the Security Council to join

the French-Mexican initiative and refrain from using the right to veto when there is a risk of mass atrocity crimes being committed. Indeed, the General Assembly must act when the Council is paralysed.

We therefore welcome the fact in the light of a crisis, such as the pandemic, 179 countries co-sponsored resolution 74/274, spearheaded by Mexico in April last year, which promotes just, transparent and equitable access to the vaccines, which we all knew would soon emerge. However, that resolution was not binding. Today, 17 months later, we continue to emphasize that, in order to overcome the pandemic, we must distribute the vaccines more quickly, more fairly and more efficiently.

In conclusion, it is imperative that the Security Council play a more active role in conflict prevention. However, there is a reluctance for the Council to address issues that may not yet pose a threat to international peace and security at the time but could become such a threat. That limits its ability to act preventively. It would be very interesting to know the views of The Elders in that regard.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to commend Ireland for choosing to dedicate today's Council's meeting to hearing the views of The Elders, that exceptional group of international leaders and actors who dedicate their vast expertise and rich experiences to the service of peace, justice and human rights.

I would like to thank Mrs. Mary Robinson and Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi for their valuable briefings, as well as to welcome the other members of The Elders present with us, namely, Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf and Mr. Zedillo.

The Security Council is currently considering a large number of conflict and tension situations in the world, including what is new and what has been on its agenda for several years and even decades, especially the Palestinian question, during which thousands of victims have fallen, along with destruction and violations.

Despite the Security Council addressing these issues periodically, even monthly sometimes, and despite the huge number of resolutions that have been adopted on these issues, the paths of political settlement that have been launched and the United Nations peacekeeping missions that have been created and their mandates extended, in addition to the repeated calls of the Secretary-General for a ceasefire, the issue of achieving peace and establishing international security is still elusive in many regions and situations.

Civilians, especially children and women, remain at the top of the list of victims of violence, acts of aggression and various kinds of violations, while other regions witness alternating periods of stability and insecurity that sometimes turn into armed conflicts obliterating the peace gains previously achieved. Also, some other situations can be classified as neither war nor peace.

All these situations are marred by tension and anticipation, draining the capabilities and energies of the countries and peoples concerned, disrupting their development paths and requiring great effort and follow-up from the United Nations. Most such situations are accompanied by human suffering and human rights violations.

That outcome motivates us to intensify and unify efforts within the Security Council and work to make it more effective in its handling of these various situations and the enforcement of its resolutions. It also prompts us to question how we can make the Council more efficient in its role, especially with regard to the mandatory implementation of its resolutions, conflict prevention, conflict settlement and ending the suffering of millions of people.

We need an objective diagnosis of the Security Council's performance so that we can develop appropriate solutions. Here, I address the members of The Elders, seeking their opinion in that regard, especially in the light of the exacerbation of threats and challenges to international peace and security, such as terrorism, climate change, natural disasters, health pandemics, cyberthreats and weapons of mass destruction, in addition to the complexity of existing crises and conflicts and the emergence of new ones. In that context, the Council may need to develop new working mechanisms and approaches in order to be able to address those various challenges. Here, too, I would like to hear the opinion of the members of The Elders on the role that the Security Council can play in dealing with such new threats, especially in the absence of consensus among its members about whether all of them fall within its competence. That was proved by the long negotiations to adopt resolution 2532 (2020), on the coronavirus disease.

The members of the Security Council unanimously agree on the strategic importance of cooperation and complementarity between the Security Council and regional organizations. Despite the ongoing regular consultations in that area, the prevailing impression remains that such cooperation has not reached the

desired level, especially in the African continent and the Arab region, which witness the largest number of issues on the Security Council's agenda and host the highest number of United Nations peacekeeping missions. I would therefore like to pose a question to the members of The Elders: How do you envisage more effective cooperation and the sharing of roles between the members of the Security Council and regional organizations, particularly given the long duration of many issues on the Council's agendas as the situations continue to deteriorate in many conflict regions?

I would like to once again thank the President of the Council for organizing this meeting and the members of The Elders for their rich contribution to today's discussion.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): Let me start by thanking the Irish presidency for convening this meeting to allow a candid dialogue with The Elders. We commend the efforts of The Elders and highly value their ideas and insights on issues related to the mandate of the Security Council.

During our presidencies in January 2020 and April 2021, Viet Nam had opportunities to invite the Chair and the Deputy Chair of The Elders to brief the Security Council on the topics of upholding the Charter of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security (see S/PV.8699) and cooperation with regional organizations (see S/2021/394), respectively.

At no time has humankind been confronted with such complex global challenges as nowadays. International and internal armed conflicts, the arms race, the existence and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, transnational organized crime, poverty, climate change and pandemics are some examples.

As the world that we inhabit is increasingly globalized and interconnected, we are only as strong as our weakest link. We firmly believe that multilateralism based on international law and the collective work of the United Nations, the Member States and all other stakeholders is our most effective response to those challenges. Multilateralism serves both to cure and to prevent the world's predicaments.

I listened with great attention to Mrs. Robinson and Mr. Brahimi's insightful briefings and thank them for their wise words and recommendations. In that regard, I wish to underline the following points.

First, conflict prevention ought to be at the core of the work of the Security Council. The Council should utilize all the tools at its disposal to contribute to prevention, post-conflict recovery and sustaining peace efforts. Peacekeepers require our continued support and resources to fulfil their mandates in increasingly complex and evolving situations. We must foster a sense of ownership among Governments and local authorities, especially in post-conflict and reconstruction.

Secondly, in order to make the multilateral system work more efficiently, responsively and in synergy, reforms are a prerequisite. The Security Council is no exception. It is critical to enhance its transparency, democracy, representativeness and effectiveness. Its solidarity and unity must always be prioritized.

We must also support the complementary role of regional organizations, such as the African Union, in maintaining international and regional peace and security. In our region, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has affirmed its centrality in the regional security architecture, including in conflict prevention and resolution and addressing regional and international issues.

At the national level, we need a whole-of-Government approach that engages the local community, fosters public-private cooperation and supports the most vulnerable. The multilateral approach, which entails national capacity-building assistance, is of the utmost necessity.

Thirdly, I agree that the Council should not let new challenges to international peace and security fly under its radar. The Charter of the United Nations lays the timeless foundation for an international order that serves the interests of the international community. Our collective and individual actions must fully abide by and uphold international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In that connection, I would like to ask The Elders what in their view are practical measures to enhance the Council's efficiency in tackling new challenges while maintaining unity and inclusivity.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I take this opportunity to recall that France joined the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States in condemning the events that took place in Guinea on 5 September and in calling for a return to constitutional order and for the release of President Condé. That crisis is emblematic of the importance of

regional organizations, which the Security Council must take into account in fulfilling its mandate.

I thank Mrs. Robinson and Mr. Brahimi for their briefings. Through them, I commend the work done by The Elders for international peace and security. We are fully in agreement with them. The world needs strong multilateralism and an effective Security Council. That is essential to meet the challenges of our time. Collectively, we must think about how to act more effectively.

As members of the Security Council, the guarantor of international peace and security, we must make full use of the tools at our disposal. The mandates we give to the United Nations are a valuable tool. I commend the work of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and the 80,000 Blue Helmets deployed in dangerous areas in the Central African Republic, in Mali and South Sudan. In Afghanistan, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan is playing a fundamental role alongside humanitarian agencies in a critical context. That role must continue.

Our unity is a condition for the success of United Nations action. We demonstrated that unity in 2011 in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, a country that is now well on its way to reconciliation. In Libya, peace is within reach. Our support for the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections on 24 December is essential for stability and reconciliation. With respect to Syria, I call on the Security Council to set aside its differences to finally resolve the conflict, in accordance with resolution 2254 (2015).

Peace cannot be achieved without genuine equality between women and men or without the effective participation of women and young people in decision-making. The \$10 billion mobilized at the Generation Equality Forum in Paris in July must contribute to that.

In the current environment, the integrity of the existing non-proliferation norms must be maintained. At the heart of those norms is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. That requires a strong and united response to proliferation, including by working hard to promote the mutual return of the United States and Iran to compliance with their commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, agreed in 2015 in Vienna. That also requires working on the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea. Those are the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all.

Making optimal use of the tools at our disposal is one thing, but we must also see together how we can go beyond that. France is committed to Security Council reform in order to strengthen its authority and its representativeness while preserving its decision-making character. We support its expansion in both categories of membership and an increased presence for Africa. We also call on all Member States, in particular the permanent members of the Security Council, to join the initiative that we have put forward, together with Mexico, for the voluntary and collective suspension of the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities.

We can also expand our response. That is the objective of the project that the countries of the Sahel, France and their partners are promoting through the Coalition for the Sahel. It seeks to respond to all the dimensions of the crisis: the fight against terrorism, the strengthening of military capabilities, the redeployment of Government services, and humanitarian and development efforts. The European Union fully supports those efforts. The United Nations must do more.

Responding to crises also means fighting impunity and ensuring respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. We call on all Member States to join the call for humanitarian action that we have launched with Germany.

Lastly, the most effective tool for addressing crises is prevention. Prevention means identifying tomorrow's crises. It also means containing threats before they escalate. For example, we provided a collective response to the coronavirus disease with resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2565 (2021), which must be implemented as a matter of urgency.

We also know that the consequences of global warming are unprecedented. If that issue is better reflected in our resolutions, its impact on international peace and security must truly become a central element of our response to crises.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Ireland.

First, I want to thank The Elders for being here with us today. President Robinson's and Elder Emeritus Brahimi's briefings today were both important and alarming. I also thank former Presidents Johnson-Sirleaf and Zedillo for their presence with us today. The Security Council needs the wisdom, clarity and courage that their messages convey.

Mary Robinson and Lakhdar Brahimi have called our attention to the deep challenges we face, the challenges we often struggle to recognize and the challenges we have many times failed to address. In their calls, they recognize a common inescapable reality: the challenges we face are too great and too global for any one country — whether a small island like my own or a global super-Power of which several are represented at this table — to overcome alone. That is why we all sit together in this symbolic horseshoe, looking across at each other, talking about working together and not always succeeding in doing so.

Time and again we pay lip service to the imperative of unity of purpose and to the need for the Security Council to listen to other voices — the voices of regional organizations and of influential and experienced actors, such as The Elders. Their messages today drive home the truth that we are bound together by our inaction, as well as by the responsibility for the consequences of that inaction.

The inescapable reality is that multilateralism must be at the heart of how we seek to deal with our global challenges, not least to the threats to international peace and security. That was the ambitious vision of the drafters of the Charter in 1945, with the almost unbridled optimism that their determination to work together could save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. That is actually the momentous responsibility placed on the shoulders of the Council every day, and that is the clarion call that we heard this morning from The Elders.

For a small country such as Ireland, multilateralism is in our DNA. We are a global island, deeply connected in everything we do. It is at the core of how we approach international peace and security. It is expressed in our commitment to the Blue Helmets of United Nations peacekeeping. It is expressed in our commitment to promoting disarmament in Ireland's foreign policy, and it is grounded in our lived experience of conflict — an experience that continues to teach us that for peace processes to be sustainable, they must be inclusive, ensuring that the voices of the most vulnerable, often women and other marginalized groups, are not only heard but listened to. Our commitment to multilateralism is matched by our courage to defend it.

The threats to peace and security have changed since 1945. Today climate change is the defining challenge of our generation. Its impact is global, and our collective security is at risk. We have heard first-hand in the Council how the negative effects of climate change are

compounding other drivers of conflict such as poverty and inequality to undermine stability in regions such as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. If we fail to face up to the realities, the destabilizing effects of climate change will eventually be felt in all countries.

We are using our presidency this month to consider the concrete steps that the Council can take in response to climate security risks. We must put the necessary systems in place to allow the Council to take account of the adverse impacts of climate change in the delivery of its mandate.

Like many around this table and around the world, I am inspired by the work and wisdom of The Elders. For me, as an Irish woman, the words of Ireland's former President Mary Robinson have particular resonance. Many have mentioned the crisis in Afghanistan today. With the plight of women and girls in Afghanistan foremost in my mind in recent weeks, I am reminded of something that former President Robinson once said:

“In a society where the rights and potential of women are constrained, no man can be truly free. He may have power, but he will not have freedom.”

The Council will continue its urgent consideration of the situation in Afghanistan in the debate to be held on Thursday and in the negotiation of the mandate for the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan. As we do so, I call on the Council to do everything in its power to promote and protect the human rights of the brave women of Afghanistan. A key measure of the new dispensation in Kabul will be how it treats its women and girls.

Afghanistan is but one of the many crises that the Council is grappling with. From Ethiopia to Yemen, to Haiti and Syria, we must work together on collective responses to increasingly complex challenging circumstances. The promotion of respect for human rights, including the protection of civil-society space and of human rights defenders, must lie at the heart of our commitment to those and other countries in crisis.

It is a lesson hard learned that we in the Security Council simply cannot afford to be divided on issues that require urgent action. If and when we are divided, the vulnerable in fragile contexts suffer the consequences. Appeals for a united Council may sound idealistic, but that is not merely an ideal. That is a reality for millions of vulnerable people around the world. Those people, many faced with war, famine or sexual violence in conflict, are relying on us here in this Chamber to come together

and to act. That is our responsibility, individually and collectively. That was the promise of the Charter in 1945. That is still the promise of the Charter in 2021. We know that The Elders are working tirelessly to help realize that promise, and we will rely on their encouragement today to fortify our efforts at this table.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mrs. Robinson to respond to the questions posed and comments made.

Mrs. Robinson: I would like to begin by thanking all members of the Security Council for the very warm way in which they have welcomed the contribution that both Lakhdar Brahimi and I have made, welcomed the presence of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Ernesto Zedillo, and welcomed the work of The Elders. We deeply appreciate this, because we are very passionate about our work; we are very committed to it, and it is a privilege for us to be able to brief.

Members heard not very long ago from Ban Ki-moon, now one of my deputies but, obviously, also my former boss on at least three mandates, and we would hope to continue that relationship. We believe that it actually is an opportunity to discuss and go back to the fundamentals of the Security Council and to both remind members and have them remind one another, because, as I listened, I was actually quite struck by the strong affirmation of many members in support of the importance of a coherent, integrated multilateral system and the fact that we need that in the world.

In many ways, I felt that maybe having conversations of this kind or dialogues of this kind with The Elders from time to time gives members an opportunity to be on their very best behaviour as a Security Council; indeed, I feel that today they have been on their best behaviour, and that is good, because it shows that they have the capacity to perhaps find more in common than they sometimes do on a daily basis; when they are tackling the weeds of a problem, they may find that it is more divisive.

Members asked a number of very relevant and very good questions. I am going to give short answers, not very adequate ones, probably, at this stage; but, fortunately, Madam President, through the generous hosting by Ireland of a lunch for us afterwards with all four of my colleagues, you will be able to hear in particular from Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Ernesto Zedillo and hear

more from Mr. Brahimi and myself in response to the questions posed, and there may even be more questions.

Let me deal with some of them that I felt were very much to the point.

First, let me touch on early questions posed by the representatives of the United Kingdom and Estonia about Tigray, specifically about the appointment of former President Obasanjo as High Representative for the Horn of Africa. We certainly welcome that appointment; there is some concern that he may not be as well received on the Tigray side, but, hopefully, that will work. But we also, members will recall, in my address this morning, suggested — and we did this deliberately — a possible visit by the Security Council, because if members visit, they will go to Addis Ababa, and that would give the Security Council the opportunity to link with the African Union on this issue in a very, very visible way.

I am aware that the Security Council has made a number of visits to the Sahel and Lake Chad and a number of visits to countries including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, when I served with my mandate on the Great Lakes, and that they have not been able to recently because of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). But perhaps it would be good if it were possible for the Council to consider as early a visit as possible and in a close dialogue and link with the African Union and its efforts in relation to Tigray.

I was very touched by the fact that the representative of Kenya spoke of our mandate from Nelson Mandela. I have those words ringing in my ears at all times. He referenced a number of issues and spoke about the inequalities of COVID-19, as a number of others did. One of the inequalities that The Elders are particularly focused on at the moment is the inequitable access to vaccines, which, in our world today, is quite shocking. Two of The Elders — the two who have not taken the floor this morning, but who will be with us at lunch — are deeply involved with this issue. President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf co-chaired the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, and President Ernesto Zedillo was a member of that Panel. I think that the recommendations of the Panel were very well thought through especially because it did not see COVID-19 as only a health problem. It is obviously a health problem, but it is also so much more: it is an economic problem, a political problem and a social problem. That is why we urge the General Assembly to adopt a holistic declaration on COVID-19 because the pandemic is not something just for the World Health Organization. It is much more

than that. It is for heads of States and Governments to live up to their responsibilities to address it. Hopefully that will take place shortly during the high-level week at the General Assembly.

With regard to the reference to international human rights and democracy and gender equality, I actually wanted to recall that visit to Afghanistan in March 2002 because I wanted to emphasize that human rights are not eastern or western or northern or southern rights. They are fundamental human rights, and every State, every State represented in this Chamber, has recognized that. Not only do States Members of the United Nations constantly refer in different instruments, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the Sustainable Development Goals, to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but every country accepts the Universal Declaration. Most accept one or more of the additional covenants or the conventions. This gives a collective sense of their importance.

But human rights are also embedded in the culture of countries, and that is the important message that the women of Afghanistan have given us. It was their Charter, not some external Charter. The Charter was their Charter. They praised Allah in launching it, which means that it was in conformity with their culture. Further, a great deal of progress was made in the Constitution, the laws and the policies of the country, which have helped at women and girls and increased the participation of women and girls in Afghanistan. I plead with the Security Council — and, as I said earlier, specifically with those countries that will be very actively dealing with the Taliban over the coming months — to remember that we have just marked, as the representative of France said, the holding of the Generation Equality Forum. What would, women and girls in the world think if we allowed the rights that women themselves had secured to be completely abolished by a military takeover, basically a coup, by the Taliban? It would be extremely shocking. It is therefore extremely important that we keep that in mind.

I was also very glad that a significant number of Council members made reference to climate change. I know that we are increasingly having to deal with the issue and that there is an informal group co-chaired by Ireland on climate and security. Knowing that I had the opportunity to come and speak with the Council briefly today, I recently asked a number of top climate scientists how they would tell the Security Council to consider climate change a security issue. They said,

“but how could it not consider it to be so? Climate change is a threat multiplier: with respect to any issue, climate change makes things so much worse. It is an existential threat. How could it not be seen as a security issue?”

That was absolutely the response that I got from climate scientists.

I therefore urge the Council to see climate change as a security issue, and I would urge members, if they do come together around a draft resolution, that they make it a strong resolution, because a weak Security Council resolution would not help at all. Since a strong resolution is needed, it may take some time for the implications for the world to be thought through in terms of really understanding the threat that is posed by climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has in its recent report and in its special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C told the Council in no uncertain terms some things that Council members can certainly take on board.

I was glad that there was a reference to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to the nuclear issue. As I said in my briefing, I am pleased that Ireland is raising the broad nuclear issue later this month.

Perhaps I can end by recognizing that opportunities such as today’s meeting for the Security Council to stand back a little bit from its very tough agenda—I acknowledge that it has to deal with very difficult issues and that its members have different national positions — and to reflect are good for members’ collective commitment. Members are not individuals when they come to the Security Council: they are members of the Security Council, they are the elected 10 and the permanent five, and they have to take the opportunity to forge a collective spirit and work together. The world needs them to work as well as they can despite all the deficiencies that have been mentioned, including the composition of this body, which is not representative of the real world, and yet it has great responsibilities and must uphold those responsibilities.

I would therefore like to end by simply saying that The Elders of course support the restraint on the veto in cases of mass atrocities, which a number of countries — France, Mexico and other countries — have been putting forward. We would also like to see other reforms. Ban Ki-moon has spoken before and to the Security Council about ways in which it can improve, including in the way press statements are made. Press

statements should not require unanimity although that has been the required practice until now.

I end by again thanking Ireland for inviting us, four of us Elders, to sit in the Chamber — two of us given the opportunity to speak — and for hosting a lunch that will allow further discussion about the important areas for which the United Nations Charter charges the Security Council with responsibility.

The President: I thank President Robinson for her clarifications as well as all of the Elders. I thank Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi and Presidents Zedillo and Johnson-Sirleaf for their presence in the Chamber today.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.