



# Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

## 8900<sup>th</sup> meeting

Tuesday, 9 November 2021, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. López Obrador/Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco . . . . . (Mexico)

*Members:*

China . . . . .	Mr. Zhang Jun
Estonia . . . . .	Ms. Liimets
France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivière
India . . . . .	Mr. Singh
Ireland . . . . .	Ms. Byrne Nason
Kenya . . . . .	Mr. Kimani
Niger . . . . .	Mr. Maman Sani
Norway . . . . .	Ms. Juul
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines . . . . .	Ms. King
Tunisia . . . . .	Mr. Ladeb
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America . . . . .	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield
Viet Nam . . . . .	Mr. Dang

## Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Exclusion, inequality and conflict

Letter dated 15 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2021/883)

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In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of Security Council members dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372), which was agreed in light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this official record of the Security Council will be supplemented by a compilation of annexes (S/2021/935) containing the statements submitted by interested non-members of the Council.



*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**

#### **Exclusion, inequality and conflicts**

#### **Letter dated 15 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2021/883)**

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, ministers and other high-level representatives present at today's meeting. Their participation is an affirmation of the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Chile, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Malta, Morocco, the Netherlands, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Slovakia, South Africa, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and anyone who decides to do so, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Lourdes Tibán Guala, indigenous affairs expert, to participate in this meeting.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2021/883, which contains the text of a letter dated 15 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

**The Secretary-General** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Government of Mexico for convening today's debate on an issue that is at the heart of so many challenges facing the Security Council.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has increased hardship and inequality for the poorest and most vulnerable people. Some 120 million additional people have fallen into poverty. Hunger and famine stalk millions of people around the world. We are facing the biggest global recession since the Second World War. Billions of people lack the necessary safety nets to cope with difficulties in terms of social protection, health care and labour protection. The inhabitants of the richest countries are receiving their third dose of the vaccine against COVID-19, while only 5 per cent of the population of Africa are fully vaccinated. Even before the pandemic, the world's billionaires accumulated more wealth than 60 per cent of the world's population, and that gap has widened considerably.

At the same time, an asymmetric recovery is in the works. While advanced economies are investing 28 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) in economic recovery, least developed countries are investing only 1.8 per cent — a much lower amount.

When discussing economic inequalities last year, Mr. President, you reminded us of fictitious policies based on the notion that if people at the top do well, those who are at the bottom will also do well. As you said on that occasion, "wealth is not contagious". Exclusion and inequalities of all kinds — economic, social and cultural — have a devastating cost in terms of security. In fact, rising inequalities are a factor in growing instability, especially in areas where basic services are lacking, such as health care, education, security and justice, and where historical injustices, inequalities and systematic oppression have come to create endless cycles of poverty and unfavourable conditions for entire generations.

*(spoke in English)*

Today we face the highest number of violent conflicts since 1945. They are lasting longer and are more complex. A dangerous sense of impunity is taking hold — seen in the recent seizures of power by force, including military coups. Human rights and the rule of law are under assault — from Afghanistan, where girls are once again being denied an education and women denied their rightful place in society; to Myanmar, where minorities are targeted, brutalized and forced to flee; to Ethiopia, where a man-made humanitarian crisis is unfolding before our eyes. These and other tragedies are enflamed by COVID-19 and the climate emergency. Humanitarian funding, assistance

and conflict management tools — the very kind that the United Nations provides around the world — are all under tremendous strain. Peace has never been more urgent.

That is why conflict prevention is at the heart of my proposed new agenda for peace, as part of the report *Our Common Agenda*. The agenda calls on the global community to work as one — in solidarity, as a human family — to address the roots of violent conflicts; to build and strengthen the bonds of trust between people who inhabit the same borders and in the Governments and institutions representing them; and for countries in transition, to ensure that all groups are part of the peace process, so that people can reject the voices of division and instead lend their hands to the task of shaping a better future for all.

Without inclusion, the puzzle of peace remains incomplete, with many gaps to be filled. Today I should like to outline a road map for inclusion, built around four key pathways to fill these gaps: people, prevention, gender and institutions.

First, we need to invest in the development of all people, equally. Last year, military spending as a share of GDP saw its largest annual increase since 2009. It is now approaching \$2 trillion annually. Imagine the progress we could make — the peace we could build, the conflicts we could prevent — if we dedicated even a fraction of this to human development, equality and inclusion, especially in countries affected by conflict and crises, which have the least fiscal space to invest in a sustainable, inclusive recovery for all.

My report *Our Common Agenda* calls for a new social contract within all societies. This means investing in universal health coverage, social protection and safety nets accessible to all. It means education and training for all people so they can envision and build better, more prosperous futures. It means opening the doors to civil and economic life to all, equally and without discrimination. And it means ensuring access to the COVID-19 vaccines for all.

Secondly, we need to strengthen our prevention agenda on multiple fronts to address different types of exclusion and inequalities. This includes more rigorous monitoring of growing inequalities and perceptions of them, including of gender and youth, to address grievances early. It includes ensuring inclusion at every step of the peace process, from local dialogue and

conflict resolution to peace negotiations, transitions and establishing national institutions.

That is why, through our country presence and missions, the United Nations works to keep the lines of dialogue open and flowing among State institutions, civil society, communities and individuals at every point. And throughout, we need to bring the entire United Nations system and all partners around our common cause of peace. The success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development depends on solidarity as we support Governments' efforts to build development for all and ensure that no one is left behind. Ending inequalities and exclusion is a critical part of this and a vital step towards giving every person a chance to contribute to their country's future.

Thirdly, we must recognize and prioritize the crucial role of women in building peace. We can draw a straight line between violence against and the exclusion of women and civil oppression and violent conflict — from rape and sexual slavery being used as tools of war, to the thread of misogyny that runs through violent extremist thought and to the exclusion of women from positions of leadership and in peace processes.

That is why the United Nations continues to stand up for the rights of women and girls around the world. That includes in Afghanistan, where we continue to work with the de facto authorities to keep girls in school and ensure that women can fully participate in civil and economic life.

Women are also at the centre of our conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts. We are increasing the number of women peacekeepers. We now have more women leading our field missions than ever before, with parity among our heads or deputy heads of missions. And 40 per cent of the Peacebuilding Fund focuses on gender equality and women's rights. We know that more lasting and sustainable peace happens when women lead and make decisions in mediation and peace processes. We will continue building on this important work in the years ahead.

*(spoke in French)*

Fourthly, we must build trust through inclusive national institutions that represent the entire population and whose action is rooted in human rights and the rule of law. That requires justice that applies to everyone equally, without favouring the rich or the powerful. It requires building institutions capable of dealing with

corruption and abuse of power, based on the principles of integrity, transparency and accountability. It requires policies and laws that specifically protect vulnerable groups, including against all forms of discrimination. Finally, it requires responsive and effective security institutions and guarantors of the rule of law that take into account the needs of each individual. Instead of raising barriers, Governments and institutions need to build trust and serve everyone, without distinction.

*(spoke in English)*

In every society, diversity of culture, religion and ethnicity should be viewed as a powerful benefit, rather than as a threat. This is essential in all countries, but especially in those experiencing conflict. Without full inclusion and equality, peace is a job half done, because true, sustainable peace can be carried forward only by people who are supported, who are included and valued and who feel that they are truly part of their society and have a stake in its future.

I welcome the Council's continued support to help every person, everywhere, lend their hands, hearts and minds to the vital task of peace.

**The President** *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank the Secretary-General for his profound briefing on the issue before us.

I now give the floor to Ms. Tibán Guala.

**Ms. Tibán Guala** *(spoke in Spanish)*: I would like to begin by thanking the Government of Mexico for having invited me. I would like to briefly express the perspective of indigenous people on peace and security.

The Security Council, an organ that was born as a post-war necessity, tries to act in time so that conflicts do not become wars and endanger international peace. Peacebuilding at the United Nations refers to initiatives to help countries and regions to transition from war to peace and to reduce the risk of the outbreak or recurrence of conflicts, while strengthening national capacities to manage conflict and laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development.

Indigenous peoples are familiar with issues concerning peace and conflict in our respective States, although they are not necessarily perceived as wars or armed conflicts. But I believe it is important for the Security Council to include historical conflicts that States have not resolved, precisely because they do not involve mechanisms of mediation between parties

or disarmament, but rather are related to structural changes in public policy at the economic, political, social and cultural levels.

I will now refer to some issues that the Security Council should monitor in the future. For while they are not addressed as potential causes of war or conflict, they could appear on the list of potential processes that could jeopardize peace and security.

The first is social inequality. One of the causes that can jeopardize international peace is the increase in violence and criminality driven by groups of vulnerable individuals to survive a crisis and dominate a group of people. As a result of social inequality, we see large gaps in poverty, a lack of economic progress, malnutrition and infant mortality owing to a lack of economic resources.

Another issue is social exclusion. In our scenario, it would seem that there is only exclusion between the State and indigenous peoples — an exclusion of cultures. However, exclusion involves numerous dimensions: homelessness, imprisonment, disabilities, gender, mental illness, youth and drugs, prostitution, Roma communities and immigration. If we want lasting peace in the regions, States must pay close attention to and take into account those exclusions. The best example by Ecuador is the work it carried out in the previous decade on disabilities as a State policy.

Gender exclusion is another point that we must take into account. Conflicts have devastating consequences, such as widening the gap between women and men. Women often have fewer resources at their disposal to protect themselves and, together with their children, often make up the majority of displaced and refugee populations. In wars, tactics specifically targeting women are employed, such as sexual violence, taking away their children or using women as human shields. The Security Council must assess States' progress in ensuring justice for violations of women's rights and that women participate directly in reforming laws and public institutions with a view to reducing gender and generational exclusion.

It is significant that the international community has recognized that women's participation is essential to achieving lasting peace. Women have shown themselves to be agents of change and should have an opportunity to work even more towards achieving that goal, without neglecting the participation of indigenous and Afrodescendant women, among other ethnic

minorities who, because of their status, face a triple exclusion for being women, indigenous and poor. In that context, I suggest to the Security Council that it assess and strengthen the recommendations set out in resolution 1325 (2000), which urges the participation of women in peacebuilding, better protection from human rights violations and better access to justice and anti-discrimination services for women.

Another issue that must be taken into account is migration. It is not only a consequence but also a cause that jeopardizes international peace. In the desperate condition in which peace is impossible, migration is an escape valve, which in some cases can have more drastic consequences given that the displacement as a result of a crisis leaves many families in a vacuum because, in their new spaces, they face discrimination and even xenophobia from the host society for being migrants.

The criminalization of social struggle and the prosecution of human rights defenders is another issue that has emerged in this debate. Perhaps that is a new issue on which the Security Council should focus. The criminalization of social protest has become a tool of persecution used by States against defenders of human rights and the rights of nature, which sheds light on the situations of exclusion of several sectors of the population in decision-making between citizens and the State.

Corruption is another essential issue that must not be absent from our global debate. To a greater or lesser degree, all States in the world are involved in corruption, which is a burden that leads to enormous economic losses. However, the most worrisome thing is that it undermines confidence in institutions and endangers economic and social development, something that could jeopardize international peace in the long term.

With regard to disputes over natural resources, it is said that the third world war will be fought over natural resources and climate change. United Nations studies show that over 40 per cent of the internal armed conflicts of the past 60 years are linked to natural resources. That could be a ticking time bomb that could jeopardize the maintenance of international peace and security.

In recent years, oil has been seen as the resource that could trigger the third world war. However, the ravages of climate change, the lack of political priority, the impotence of Governments, inequalities and armed

conflicts have now shifted our focus to water, land and minerals. That, together with the eternal debate about whether water should be a luxury good or a social good accessible to all, could make water the focus of the greatest geopolitical conflict of the twenty-first century. And that may justify the fight against extractivism that is being led by indigenous peoples in the region. But for now the debate is focused on the economic needs of States and the environmental protection of indigenous peoples.

Lastly, instead of taking coercive measures or imposing economic sanctions, as it is empowered to do, the Security Council should provide incentives and acknowledge Member States that are working to reduce inequalities, exclusion and corruption and avoid confrontations among civil society, citizens and the State, which could endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Tibán Guala for her briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as President of Mexico.

I have not come here to talk about security as a synonym for military power or as a basis for the use of force. Instead, my approach is based on what was postulated by the man whom Pablo Neruda called a titan of freedoms — President Franklin Delano Roosevelt — when the United Nations was created: the right to a life free from fear and free from want, which remains the most solid foundation of security for all societies and States.

The main obstacle to the exercise of that right is corruption in all its expressions — transnational powers, opulence and frivolity as a way of life for the elite, the neoliberal model that socializes losses, privatizes profits and encourages the plundering of natural resources and the assets of peoples and nations.

It is corruption when the courts punish those who do not have the funds to buy their innocence and protect the rich and large business corporations that steal from the treasury or do not pay taxes. It is corruption when those who conceal and hide illicit funds in tax havens go unpunished. It is also corruption when shareholders and administrators of so-called vulture funds practice usury, without even losing their respectability.

It would be hypocritical to ignore that the planet's main problem is corruption in all its dimensions:

political, moral, economic, legal, fiscal and financial. It would be foolish to omit that corruption is the main cause of inequality, poverty, frustration, violence, migration and serious social conflicts.

We are in decline because never before in the history of the world has so much wealth been accumulated in so few hands through the misuse of influence and at the expense of the suffering of others, privatizing what belongs to all or what should have no owner, doctoring laws to legalize the immoral and distorting social values to make the abominable look like acceptable business.

Take, for example, the distribution of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine. While private pharmaceutical companies have sold 94 per cent of the vaccines, the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility mechanism, created by the United Nations for poor countries, has distributed only 6 per cent — a painful and utter failure.

That simple fact should lead us to admit the obvious — in today's world, generosity and a sense of the common good are being displaced by selfishness and private ambition; the spirit of cooperation is losing ground to the profit motive and we are sliding from civilization to barbarism, walking as if estranged from ourselves, forgetting moral principles and turning our backs on the suffering of humankind. If we are unable to reverse those trends through concrete actions, we will not be able to solve any of the other problems afflicting the peoples of the world.

What are we doing in Mexico in that regard? We have implemented a strategy of banishing corruption and allocating all the money recovered towards the welfare of the people, using the criterion of helping the poor first for the good of all.

Prioritizing the poor also implies accepting that peace is the result of justice and that no country can succeed if marginalization and poverty persist or even increase. We therefore maintain that the fundamental way to live free from fear, risks and violence is to put an end to unemployment, to encourage young people to work and study and to avoid family disintegration, social breakdown and the loss of cultural, moral and spiritual values.

In Mexico, it may take time to bring peace to the country, but the surest way to do so is to continue to address the root causes. For example, providing young people with study and work options can help prevent

them from turning to crime. True victory over criminal gangs will always consist in depriving them of their breeding grounds and their reserve army.

That is the same approach we are using to deal with migration. The primary thrust is not coercive measures but rather those that integrate all people into study, work, health and welfare in the places where they were born or reside so that they are not forced to leave their villages because of hunger or violence and that only those who wish to do so emigrate. Migration should be optional and not forced; it should be an individual decision and not a demographic phenomenon.

Recently, I presented President Biden with a new way of dealing with the migration phenomenon. Without ignoring the need to manage the flow, prevent disorder and guarantee human rights, I proposed that he immediately apply in three sister nations two programmes that we are successfully implementing in Chiapas, a neighbouring Central American state.

Today we are planting 200,000 hectares of fruit and timber trees there. That programme provides work for 80,000 planters. Likewise, 30,000 young people work as apprentices in that south-eastern Mexican state, receiving a minimum wage to train in workshops, businesses and other productive and social activities. If those two actions were immediately implemented in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, it would be possible to ensure that some 330,000 people who are currently at risk of emigrating for lack of work would remain in their countries.

I think that those proposals should be implemented by the United Nations in order to tackle the root causes of problems in poor countries. The most important institution of the international community must wake up from its lethargy and break out of its routine. It must reform itself and denounce and fight corruption in the world. It must fight against the rampant inequality and social unrest in the world with greater decisiveness, depth, prominence and leadership.

Never in the history of this Organization has anything truly substantive been done for the benefit of the poor, but it is never too late to do justice. Today it is time to act against marginalization by addressing the causes, not just the consequences.

Accordingly, in the next few days, the Mexican delegation will propose a global plan for fraternity and well-being to the General Assembly. The aim is to

guarantee the right to a dignified life for 750 million people who survive on less than \$2 a day. Mexico's proposal to establish a world State of fraternity and well-being can be financed through a fund from at least three sources: the collection of an annual voluntary contribution of 4 per cent of the wealth of the 1,000 richest people in the world; a similar contribution from the 1,000 largest private corporations in terms of global market value; and a contribution of 0.2 per cent of the gross domestic product of each member of the Group of 20. If that income target were met, the fund could have around \$1 trillion at its disposal annually.

In its annual review, the United Nations could set aside a day to honour or award certificates of recognition to individuals, corporations and Governments that stand out for their humanitarian commitment to helping to finance the global plan for fraternity and well-being. The fund's resources should reach the beneficiaries directly, without any intermediary, because when funds are given to civil society non-governmental organizations or other types of bodies — I do not want to generalize — in many cases those funds remain in bureaucratic structures and are used to pay for luxurious offices or consultants or are diverted and end up not reaching the beneficiaries. I therefore reiterate that the fund's resources should reach the beneficiaries directly, without any intermediary, through a personalized card or electronic purse.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund could collaborate in creating the required structure and, from next year, carry out a census of the world's poorest people. Once the target population in each country has been defined, they could begin to disburse the resources to provide allowances for the elderly and children with disabilities, scholarships for students and support for planters and young people who work as apprentices in productive activities, as well as delivering free vaccinations and medicines.

I honestly do not believe that any of the permanent members of the Security Council will oppose our proposal, since it does not involve nuclear weapons or military invasions or put the security of any State at risk. On the contrary, it seeks to build stability and peace through solidarity with those who most need our support. I am sure that all of us, rich and poor, donors and beneficiaries, will have a clearer conscience and will live with greater moral strength. In that regard, I recall what Adam Smith said:

“How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it.”

In other words, only by being good can we be happy.

Let us never forget that it is the collective duty of nations to provide every child with the right to food, health, education, work, social security, sport and recreation.

I conclude by recalling two patriots and liberators of our America: José María Morelos y Pavón, servant of the Mexican nation, who, a little more than two centuries ago, called for poverty and wealth to be moderated. Almost at the same time, Simón Bolívar said that the most perfect system of Government is that which produces the greatest degree of happiness, social security and political stability.

It is an honour to be among the permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council, which is the closest thing to a world Government and can become the most effective body for combating corruption and the noblest benefactor to the poor and forgotten on Earth.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia.

**Ms. Liimets** (Estonia): First, I would like to thank the briefers, the Secretary-General and Ms. Lourdes Tibán Guala, for their input at today's meeting.

Conflict prevention should be a clear priority for all of us. Therefore, we very much welcome today's timely debate on the underlying causes of conflicts, such as violations of human rights, exclusion, inequality and poverty. An increase in human rights violations has often preceded the eruption of an acute conflict. What we are witnessing today in Belarus is massive repression against people and intensifying acts of transnational repression. During the past few days, thousands of migrants from third countries have gathered, with the help of Belarusian authorities, along the Polish border, including some trying to breach the border fence.

All that reflects a clear pattern — the instrumentalization of human beings for political purposes with the objective of destabilizing

neighbouring countries and diverting attention from its own increasing human rights violations. The tactic of the Belarusian authorities is unacceptable. It has become a threat to international peace and security. We call on the Belarusian authorities to stop putting people's lives at risk.

Estonia strongly believes that an early focus on enhancing the resilience of communities can prevent the outbreak of conflict in the first place, as well as any relapse in violence. That includes actively and holistically addressing the root causes of instability, such as underdevelopment, the effects of climate change, poverty and the lack of education opportunities. In addition, unhindered humanitarian access to conflict areas — be it in Syria, Afghanistan, Tigray or elsewhere — must be ensured. Humanitarian access and the safety of humanitarian workers are an issue that the Security Council can and should focus on in the context of instability.

Development and peace are interlinked, as are the protection of human rights and building sustainable peace. Human rights must be at the centre of our response to any conflict and conflict prevention. It is naïve to think that it is possible to find a peaceful solution to any conflict without broad representation at the negotiating table. That concerns especially women. Consciously and continuously working towards achieving women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes is key to long-lasting peace and stability.

Exclusion and inequality, with respect to members of all vulnerable and marginalized groups, is a risk for peace and security. Human rights violations and abuses can act as triggers of conflict and are always a feature of it. Furthermore, the scale of climate-related security risks cannot be underestimated, including the gender dimension of climate change. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate change. Therefore, it is important to empower them. That is the only way to build resilient communities for everyone.

The importance of the rule of law is one more aspect that I would like to underline in the context of conflict prevention. The rule of law and development are strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Open and just societies, supported by strong, accountable institutions that respect the rule of law, provide a predictable environment for the population. It helps create sustainable livelihoods and decrease levels of poverty,

which often originate in exclusion, discrimination and disempowerment. Weak governance, the poor rule of law and weak judicial institutions are also one of the primary reasons for the insufficient protection of human rights.

In conclusion, I reiterate that Estonia will never stop stressing the importance of good governance, accountability, compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law and respect for the rule of law, which all play an indispensable role in addressing the root causes of conflict around the world in a meaningful and sustainable manner.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the Permanent Representative of the United States of America and member of President Biden's Cabinet.

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for chairing this important debate on addressing inequality and poverty and their relationship to conflict. I also thank Secretary-General Guterres and Ms. Tibán Guala for sharing how such challenges impact their work and for highlighting their recommendations for how to overcome them.

Today's debate sends a clear message from the Security Council. Inequality, marginalization and exclusion are issues of peace and security. They drive instability, violence, conflict and mass migration. There are more conflicts ongoing today than at any other point since the end of the Cold War. These conflicts, however, are not the same as the older ones. They are more violent, they last longer, they are increasingly regionalized and they involve more non-State actors.

The United States is laser-focused on stopping these conflicts and mitigating suffering. To do that, we must address the root causes of these crises. Otherwise, our work is simply applying a Band-Aid to a gaping wound. The root causes are old: stunted economic growth, competition for scarce resources and hatred for those different from ourselves. But they are exacerbated by today's modern challenges: the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, climate change and natural resource degradation. All those sources of conflict and contributors to instability represent forms of inequality, marginalization and exclusion.

The COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, for example, have affected every country, but, of course, they have not affected us all equally. In order to address

that, the United States is committed to being the world's arsenal of vaccines. We have pledged more than 1.1 billion doses and have already provided more than 230 million doses worldwide, with no strings attached, because we know that not every country can afford to produce or purchase the life-saving vaccines. It is also why, at the general debate of the General Assembly (see A/76/PV.3), President Biden announced that he would work with Congress to once again double our public international finance to \$11.4 billion annually by 2024 to help developing countries tackle the climate crisis.

We also know that every single person is born with the human rights outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That is what makes them universal. But some continue to face exclusion and marginalization because of factors that should be irrelevant — like who they are, who they love, what group they were born into, what religion they practice or the colour of their skin. As President Biden reminds us every day, that is one reason why human rights are at the centre of our foreign policy. By promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, we are doing the right thing and honouring our values. We are also practising preventive diplomacy, strengthening resiliency and ensuring that societies are less vulnerable to conflict.

In that way, all three of the United Nations pillars — development, human rights and peace and security — are mutually reinforcing. We must, therefore, take an inclusive approach to peacebuilding and conflict prevention. For example, development promotes economic growth, which is often the biggest challenge for post-conflict societies. Those thinking through peacebuilding solutions must engage local development actors early to determine the necessary steps for improving stability and ensuring lasting peace.

Meanwhile, forms of inequality and exclusion stunt economic growth. If economic disparity or the threat of violence makes it too difficult for excluded groups to survive and thrive, citizens will make the difficult choice to leave their homelands for the hope of a better future.

Similarly, if society excludes women from roles in the workplace, the country loses out on half of the workforce. That is a problem of development. It is a problem of human rights and peace and security rolled into one. Ensuring the meaningful empowerment, participation and protection of women in all aspects of the peace and security building process is necessary

for building durable and peaceful societies. For those reasons, the United States supports United Nations missions with robust human rights mandates, gender mainstreaming across mission activities and strong coordination functions with humanitarian and development organizations. Additionally, peacekeeping missions need to promote the protection of civilians and strengthen the democratic structures of governance and the rule of law. That is how the root causes of conflict are addressed. That is how the conditions for enduring peace are built.

For our part, the United States is working through international and non-governmental organizations partners to provide humanitarian assistance for those impacted by those threats and stressors, including refugees, internally displaced persons, asylum seekers and those vulnerable migrants in countries around the globe. However, no country can address inequality, marginalization and exclusion alone. We must take on those intertwined threats together. Our peacebuilding solutions need to take an inclusive approach — one that ensures development actors, human rights activists and security experts are all talking to each other and coordinating to build just, equal and durable societies.

We hope the Security Council is up to the task of organizing those efforts, ensuring that our approach is inclusive and addressing the root drivers of conflict so that we can build a more peaceful and prosperous world.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Minister of State for External Affairs of India.

**Mr. Singh** (India): Let me begin by congratulating Mexico on assuming the presidency of the Security Council during this month. I would also like to convey best wishes and greetings from my Prime Minister to the President of Mexico, His Excellency Mr. Andrés Manuel López Obrador. India and Mexico have a special relationship and it is indeed an honour for me to represent my Prime Minister at today's meeting.

I would like to thank His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres and the civil society briefer, Lourdes Tibán Guala, who is an indigenous affairs expert, for their insights on the topic of today's open debate.

During the past few decades, while inter-State conflicts have decreased, intra-State conflicts have attracted much higher level of attention from the Council. However, those conflicts have several long-

standing political, economic and social causes, which require the attention not only of the Council but also of other organs of the United Nations with specialized roles in the areas of peacebuilding and socioeconomic development. There is clearly much to be done to help countries in intra-State conflicts to achieve sustainable peace.

In that context, let me offer a few observations.

First, international efforts in the maintenance of peace and security need to be inclusive. The process of implementing a peace agreement must run along with the provision of humanitarian and emergency assistance, the resumption of economic activity and the creation of political and administrative institutions that improve governance and include all stakeholders, particularly women and disadvantaged groups. We also need to avoid politicizing humanitarian and development assistance in conflict situations. Humanitarian action must be primarily guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

Secondly, the international community needs to walk the talk by ensuring a predictable and enhanced flow of resources to countries in the post-conflict phase. Development assistance, in line with national priorities, should go a long way towards sustainable peace.

Thirdly, it is important to actively support the post-conflict reconstruction agenda, particularly in Africa. In that regard, the Peacebuilding Commission's efforts should be strengthened. Those efforts should include prioritizing the needs of the host State and coordinating the role of international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations.

Fourthly, some regional and subregional organizations have become more capable of addressing conflict situations and member States have increasingly reposed faith in their capacity to do so. That has brought positive synergy to the actions of the United Nations and the Security Council. The Security Council has the responsibility to support that trend and encourage and enable those regional and subregional organizations. We believe that the existing framework of cooperation, such as the joint United Nations-African Union framework for an enhanced partnership in peace and security needs to be implemented more proactively. In that regard, initiatives, such as the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia, the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and the Multinational

Joint Task Force, need more robust support from the Security Council and the international community.

Fifthly, the spread of terrorism, particularly in those countries facing conflict, can reverse the efforts of the international community. It is therefore imperative that terrorism, in any form or manifestation, be condemned and that those supporting it in any manner be held responsible.

Exclusion, inequality and conflict are relevant to the functioning of the Council as well. The persisting exclusion and inequality in the membership of the Security Council needs to be addressed. The international structure for maintaining peace and security and peacebuilding needs to be reformed. Global power and the capacity to address problems are much more dispersed today than they were 76 years ago. How long can the rightful voices of the developing world, including Africa, be denied? We are therefore convinced that reformed multilateralism, with the reform of the Security Council at its core, is crucial in order to deal with the complex challenges of today's world.

India has always strived to foster global solidarity across the world with our development partnership efforts, fully respecting national priorities and ensuring that our assistance remains demand-driven and contributes to employment generation and capacity-building, without creating indebtedness. That is particularly true for countries in a post-conflict phase. Whether it is with our neighbours under our Neighbourhood First policy, with African partners or with other developing countries, India has remained and will continue to be a source of strong support to help them build back better and stronger.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome your personal participation, Mr. President, in today's event. We thank the Secretary-General for his informative briefing, and Ms. Lourdes Tibán Guala for her insights.

We are grateful to Mexico for drawing attention to the topic of today's debate. It is indeed highly relevant as the socioeconomic problems facing humankind have worsened considerably and, due to the coronavirus disease pandemic, have become urgent, exposing our vulnerabilities.

Everywhere in the world, even in the wealthiest countries and regions, the unequal distribution of

wealth leads to widening inequalities, both within societies and at the international level. The situation is even more dire in those States that have never ceased to lag behind, are struggling with colonial pasts or are unable to free themselves from the burden of debt. When people lose hope in their ability to give their children a better future, the result is often an exacerbation of ethnic, religious and other tensions and struggles for power and resources.

When dealing with country-specific issues, the Security Council cannot ignore the root causes of conflict, which can be very diverse. However, in the Council's deliberations on how to address those root causes, we must focus on using the tools that we have at our disposal, namely, good offices, mediation, peacekeeping and special political missions. Of course, the mandates of those missions can include specific goals pertaining to early peacebuilding, capacity-building assistance for State institutions, including law enforcement, and even quick-impact projects. In addition, the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance is invaluable in alleviating the suffering of populations in need and thereby reducing the severity of conflicts.

The role of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund is also particularly relevant in periods of transition from conflict to stability. However, given the major socioeconomic development challenges that often exist in conflict and post-conflict States, the support they provide will, in any case, amount to no more than a Band-Aid approach. After all, neither the Security Council nor the Peacebuilding Commission possess the necessary tools to promote sustainable independent economic models, the transfer of technology, infrastructure reinforcement, industrial and agricultural development, investment in the education and health systems or job creation. When we discuss the theoretical links between human rights, development and peace and security, it is necessary to be aware that development in and of itself cannot ensure peace, and peace does not necessarily guarantee development.

It is therefore important to not only consider the interlinkages but also to understand the differences between those processes, as well as the specific United Nations organ or agency that is responsible for each of those areas. It is that logic that informs our principled position on the need to adhere to the principle of the division of labour among the principal organs of the

United Nations. The issues of sustainable development, climate change and human rights must be addressed first and foremost from dedicated platforms with the necessary tools and expertise and with universal or broad representation of States Members of the Organization. I refer here primarily to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

That same logic also lies behind our doubts regarding a number of concepts proposed in the Secretary-General's new initiative, entitled *Our Common Agenda*, where we see a tendency to blend mandates and create structures that duplicate bodies established under the Charter of the United Nations. That is fraught with the potential to generally undermine the effectiveness of our global Organization. The idea of a so-called multi-stakeholder approach aimed at gradually equalizing the status of Member States and non-State actors in the United Nations also raises a number of questions.

In that connection, we call for the careful consideration of certain elements of the reform agenda in an intergovernmental format. Moreover, we firmly believe that the truly effective implementation of the reform agenda can be achieved only on the basis of consensus decisions. We note with regret the unjustified haste with which it has been proposed to adopt decisions in the General Assembly as soon as the day after tomorrow without proper consultations, which clearly runs counter to the goal of achieving consensus. We do not believe that the Secretary-General's intention was to provoke divisions among Member States and to impose the will and understanding of one group of countries, however influential, on another.

We consider it extremely important that international assistance to States in resolving problems of any kind should be provided exclusively at their request and in close coordination with the State itself, taking into account national priorities and context, including in the legal, historical, religious and cultural fields. Each individual conflict situation requires its own specific approach; there can be no automatic formulas here. We oppose the introduction of certain universal indicators of conflicts or crises that could open the door to various abuses.

Decisions can be based only on the involvement of, and dialogue with, recipient States. Any departure from those principles, including interference in the internal affairs of States, putting pressure on so-called

undesirable Governments under the pretext of assisting them and humanitarian interventions in violation of international law, are unacceptable and often the root causes of the emergence or exacerbation of conflicts. Not all States present in this Chamber today are prepared to speak frankly in that regard. However, if we do not call things by their proper names, the tragic situations faced by a number of States, particularly in the Middle East region, will happen again. No concept, no matter how attractive, will be able to gloss over that fact.

An even more pernicious practice is the use of unlawful unilateral sanctions — or the threat of the use of sanctions — or the refusal to provide development assistance. These inhuman restrictions, especially in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, limit States' ability to overcome the pandemic's impacts and undermine the efforts of legitimate Governments to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, which exacerbates inequality at the intergovernmental level and ultimately affects the well-being of innocent people. The example of Syria, for whose cooperation our American and European colleagues are prepared to punish both companies and countries alike, vividly demonstrates this trend and casts a shadow on any humanistic discussions about the nexus between peace and development. We call on all those involved to heed the corresponding appeal of the Secretary-General and stop this harmful practice.

In conclusion, I cannot fail to mention our Estonian colleague's finding nothing better to do than to use the Security Council for yet another shaming of Belarus. May I remind her that the refugees on the border with Poland and Lithuania are seeking to get to Europe. They are not seeking to stay there. Therefore, who is creating the crisis by building fences with barbed wire and concentrating military contingents at the border?

The countries of the European Union often call for full respect for the principles of international humanitarian law, but when it comes time to abiding by it, they shift the responsibility to others. I would therefore like to ask a question: What is this failed Minsk policy in the Middle East that has led to the appearance of Syrian refugees on the borders with Poland and Lithuania? When the same thing was happening on the borders of other countries in the European Union (EU) or when refugees were coming from other countries to the EU, their words were indeed quite different, and now they are threatening to introduce sanctions against

whom and for what? It is simply because they do not wish to accept the refugees that are seeking to come to their countries within the European Union. It is time to stop shifting the blame in this regard.

**Ms. Juul** (Norway): I thank the President for honouring us with his presence in the Chamber today. I extend my appreciation to Mexico for organizing today's debate and putting this important topic on the Security Council's agenda

I also thank the Secretary-General and Ms. Guala for their insightful remarks. Today's debate strongly resonates with the Secretary-General's report, *Our Common Agenda*, which lays out how the lack of trust, the absence of justice, deepening inequalities, exclusion and marginalization can lead to, in particular, instability, fragility and conflict. We agree with these analyses and support moving this agenda forward, including in the Security Council.

Protracted armed conflicts, worsening climate change, systematic inequality and persistent poverty are affecting the peace and security of a growing number of people, and the coronavirus disease pandemic has further endangered the most vulnerable populations, compounding the root causes of conflict. To respond effectively, we must strengthen efforts across the work of the United Nations, from humanitarian assistance to development to peacebuilding and human rights, especially in order to tackle such complex issues as exclusion, inequality and poverty as drivers of conflict. For example, populations emerging from conflict need sustained investment in reconciliation as well as improved livelihoods, preparedness and resilience to respond to future crises.

For this, Norway supports an integrated approach. We are committed to the principle of the nexus, as exemplified in the Grand Bargain, the comprehensive refugee response framework and the reform of the United Nations development system. Better and more coordinating financing across the nexus is one way to move beyond institutional silos and deliver results together. Another way is by mobilizing grass-root movements and civil society, including women's organizations. This is crucial to breaking cycles of conflict and fostering sustainable solutions for people where they live.

These issues also form an important part of the United Nations preventive work, and, in this respect, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and

the Peacebuilding Fund are both important tools for coherence. The PBC acts as a bridge among the principal organs and relevant United Nations entities by sharing advice and peacebuilding needs and priorities. It is well placed to contribute to a holistic approach and should be better utilized. We encourage the Security Council to actively seek this view and support the PBC in its work.

Inclusive societies are peaceful societies. Development and peace gains are not sustainable if a large part of a population is marginalized and if human rights are not respected. We know that exclusion is a driver of conflict, which is why promoting human rights is one key component of both Norway's foreign policy and development policy. Women's empowerment through direct and meaningful participation is fundamental and a well-proven way to build sustainable peace. Creating a culture of public participation can also ease tension, reduce frustration and build trust, as can accountable institutions and competent, independent and impartial judiciaries, which are essential to upholding the rule of law and ensuring them that human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected.

There is little hope of achieving peace and security as long as underlying political conflicts remain unresolved, especially those stemming from exclusion and inequality. We must all give higher priority towards promoting inclusive political settlements in our peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts.

**Mr. Zhang Jun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*) China wishes to thank Mexico for its initiative to convene this open debate and welcomes His Excellency President López Obrador as he presides over today's meeting.

In his briefing, Secretary-General Guterres provided us with an insightful perspective and food for thought for our discussion, for which I wish to thank him. I also listened attentively to the statement made by Ms. Lourdes Tibán Guala.

Equality as a value is an eternal pursuit of human society. Regrettably, in this twenty-first century, inequality between and within countries remains ubiquitous and is often a major source of tension and conflict. The prevalence of unilateralism and hegemonism has perpetuated unfair and irrational arrangements within the global governance architecture, serving as the main drivers of inequality in international relations. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, climate change and the

application of emerging technologies are also exacerbating the challenges presented by the wealth gap and the North-South divide, giving rise to new forms of inequality. The international community, including the Security Council, should pay close attention to this issue, strengthen coordination in the context of peace and security and respond collectively.

Achieving inclusive development for all is the fundamental way to address inequality and eliminate conflicts. The most salient manifestation of inequality facing the world today is the yawning gap in immunization between developed and developing countries, which not only hinders the global pandemic response, but also constitutes a grave injustice to the people in developing countries. We call for vigorous international cooperation on vaccines and for ensuring that vaccines are accessible and affordable as a public good to people all over the world.

China has been working hard towards that goal. So far, China has provided more than 1.6 billion doses of vaccine to more than 100 countries and international organizations. We will provide more than 2 billion doses overseas this year. China is the largest provider of vaccines to the world.

In a post-COVID-19 era, development is the foremost demand of people in all countries. A people-centred approach is essential. While making the cake bigger, the fruits of development should be shared fairly so that all people can enjoy a better life.

In the era of globalization, the world's long-term development cannot be predicated on some countries growing richer while others are mired in protracted poverty and backwardness. It is only by fundamentally eradicating development inequality, inadequacy and imbalance and achieving the common development of all countries that the world can strive towards a better future. Practices, such as beggar-thy-neighbour policies, the exportation of crises and making gains at the expense of others will only destroy the foundation of common development. Those practices are neither ethical nor tenable.

Not long ago, Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward a global development initiative. The core idea of that is to uphold inclusiveness and benefits for all, advocate building partnerships and leave not a single country behind in global development. We should place development front and centre in international cooperation, continue to nurture an open world economy

and create the conditions for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In order to promote and guarantee social equality, durable and solid institutional arrangements are essential. In the process of reconstruction, post-conflict countries should be mindful of their own national realities, build broad-based and inclusive political architecture, improve the rule of law, ensure the equal participation of all social groups and strata in national governance, and let the people be the true masters of their country.

History has shown us time and again that undermining the principle of sovereign equality and repeatedly interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, imposing governance models on developing countries and even pitting one faction against another often lead to internal conflicts in those countries. The disastrous fallout of power politics and military intervention may become a hotbed of extremist ideologies, playing into the hands of those preaching hatred and inciting violence. That lesson must be conscientiously learned.

We should promote and foster international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation. It is imperative to uphold the equality of nations large and small, practice genuine multilateralism and unswervingly commit to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations so that all countries and peoples can partake in peace, development and dignity and jointly shape the future of humankind.

In that regard, the Security Council shoulders important responsibilities and carries the universal expectation of the international community. China stands ready to work with all members of the Council in an unrelenting effort to build a better future.

**Mr. Kimani** (Kenya): I congratulate Your Excellency, Mr. Andrés Manuel López Obrador, President of the United Mexican States, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and for convening this important debate. I also thank His Excellency the Secretary-General and Ms. Lourdes Tibán Guala for their insightful briefings.

Your choice, Mr. President, of topic of today is strongly linked to the debate on diversity, State-building and the search for peace (see S/PV.8877), which was presided over by President Uhuru Kenyatta almost

exactly a month ago. They have in common an urgency in calling the world's attention to the risks to peace and security that arise from the State's inability to prevent and address conflicts defined by race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, gender and other markers of identity before they escalate into violence.

We embrace your profound recognition of the disfiguring, demoralizing and destructive inequalities and exclusions in the global multilateral and economic system and agree with your insight that, at its core, a globalized corruption is one of the greatest risks to peace and security.

Kenya is convinced that a key competence of the State in its protection of national security is its legal, administrative and operational capacity in responding to underlying grievances on the basis of social and cultural differences. That is a competence as important to the wealthiest and most established democracies as it is to countries in the active grip of war and terrorism.

In every part of the world, differences are being weaponized, whether in the context of elections or in demands for political or economic change. The result is a fundamental challenge to stability and the maintenance of peace and security. This is becoming an underlying cause and driver of many protracted conflicts, involving both State and non-State actors, that have had serious security and humanitarian consequences around the world.

This weaponization of difference is the basis of radicalization conducive to terrorism. Everywhere it breaks into hate speech and incitement to violence, atrocities and war crimes are the result. It is leading to the disruption of civic peace. It is eroding trust in institutions and striking at the legitimacy that is a necessary component of effective governance.

Protecting international peace and security will require a Security Council and a United Nations and regional organizations that actively encourage and enable the effective management of diversity, in compliance with international human rights law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I will suggest four points that should underpin our efforts to address exclusion, inequality and conflicts on the basis of race, ethnicity, religious affiliation and other differences.

First, Excellency, we embrace your powerful point on the need to challenge the corruption that is endemic in the international system. It is the effects of that

corruption that lead to the poverty, inequalities and exclusions that then become weaponized and turned into the bases of violent conflict. Indeed, the major affliction of the international multilateral system is a symptom of this corruption that we see reflected in double standards and ever-moving goalposts in the service of an unjust hierarchy established to maintain the most powerful and the wealthiest at the expense of the weakest and the most vulnerable.

Secondly, the Security Council can contribute to breaking the vicious cycles involving exclusion, inequality and conflict by embedding within the United Nations peacekeeping architecture capacity-building mandates that deliver State institutions that promote equality and harness diversity for sustained peace and development.

Thirdly, the Security Council should make much greater use of the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission, for its part, should come to grips with the role that exclusion and the escalation of identity-based conflicts and grievances play in the ensuing violence.

Fourthly, civic and political speech is increasingly mediated by technology. Between the right to free speech of the speaker to the right of association of the listener is a social-media algorithm built to profit from the effects of how it directs and ranks that speech. The result is a subtle but important challenge to free speech and freedom of association.

These precious values must now contend with echo chambers and fake news, misinformation and disinformation at scale. Technology allows billions to be targeted as individuals. It is changing politics and will continue to do so in both positive ways and extremely destructive ones.

There are important conversations going on, particularly in the global North on the regulation of such technologies, but the global South is not sufficiently included. We must increase the engagement among States, technology companies and the United Nations. Positive collaboration will enable the development and deployment of early-warning tools to be used within peace operations and country teams in order to detect escalation trends and facilitate pre-emptive measures in the name of peace.

In conclusion, Kenya looks forward to continued conversations on how the Security Council can help

insert capabilities and tools that allow States and the international community to be better protected against conflicts driven by the politicization of racial, ethnic, religious and other social and cultural differences, as well as the economic differences that result from corruption.

**Mr. De Rivière** (France) (*spoke in French*): I welcome Mexico's organization of this debate, which recalls three essential conditions for lasting peace: inclusion, the guarantee of human rights and development.

First, with regard to inclusion, conflict resolution requires political solutions that bring together all the stakeholders. That is borne out time and again. In Ethiopia, France is calling on the authorities to launch an inclusive national dialogue without delay, in accordance with their commitments. In the Central African Republic, the ceasefire must allow for an immediate end to the violence and make way for inclusive dialogue.

Peacekeeping operations must combat exclusion, particularly through community violence reduction programmes. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration initiatives for ex-combatants should facilitate inclusion. The participation of all citizens in transparent and credible electoral processes is essential. In Mali, for example, we call on the authorities to honour their commitments and to organize elections in order to end the transition. In Haiti, all political actors must build the consensus necessary to put in place an inclusive Government capable of ensuring peaceful elections.

Secondly, in order to tackle the root causes of conflict, we must guarantee human rights and respond to humanitarian needs. The protection of fundamental freedoms and the rule of law is the sine qua non for lasting peace. Acts of violence, intolerance and discrimination must not go unpunished. We must continue to prioritize the protection of women, children, minorities and the most vulnerable. In the Middle East, progress in the fight against Da'esh has not eliminated the threat to women and religious minorities. In Burma, the root causes of the Rohingya crisis persist; the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, in particular those on citizenship and equal rights, must be implemented.

With the Generation Equality Forum, France and Mexico have secured commitments and resources for

the women and peace and security agenda, but that must translate into concrete progress on the ground. In Afghanistan, France demands respect for the rights of women and girls, as those rights are already being violated by the Taliban.

Responding to humanitarian needs is crucial. We must protect civilians and ensure humanitarian access. In Syria, all parties, especially the Syrian regime, must respect international humanitarian law.

Finally, peacebuilding efforts must ensure sustainable development for the people. Poverty, growing socioeconomic inequalities as well as pandemics and environmental degradation call for multilateral responses. The new social contract promoted by the Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* reflects the increased need for cooperation and solidarity. That is how we will also be able to make progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

France is doing its part by increasing its official development assistance to 0.55 per cent of its gross national income by next year. That aid will focus on 19 priority countries, particularly in Africa, in order to protect global public goods, in particular climate, biodiversity and health, and to promote the levers of development, namely, education and equality. In order to boost global vaccination against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, France donated 67 million doses, including 64 million doses through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility mechanism. Those vaccines are currently benefiting more than 52 countries, including about 30 in Africa. Those efforts will continue.

The United Nations system as a whole must be a vehicle for inclusion and development. In parallel with the work of agencies on the ground, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, to which France quadrupled its contribution in 2021, must prevent the emergence or resurgence of conflicts. Their efforts must prioritize young people by supporting the implementation and promotion of the youth, peace and security agenda. Let us give young people the means to participate in building lasting peace, starting today.

**Mr. Ladeb** (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mexico for convening this important debate, and to welcome His Excellency President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and thank him for his statement and for presiding over our

meeting. I also thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his valuable briefing. I thank as well civil society representative Ms. Lourdes Tibán Guala for her briefing.

Experience has shown that sustained peace and security cannot be achieved by simply ending violence and conflict. Realizing peacebuilding, promoting stability and establishing security is a long-term process that requires addressing the root causes that lead to conflict, at the forefront of which are the phenomena of exclusion, marginalization and inequality.

Peace is therefore unsustainable unless it is based on a comprehensive approach that incorporates an expanded concept of security and stability, in addition to an expanded base that includes all phases of conflict resolution and prevention, political reconciliation and peacebuilding with the need to involve all the parties concerned and all segments of society, particularly women and youth. We must also address the factors that fuel violent conflict, including causes of new crises and conflicts.

The nature of conflicts has changed. Most conflicts have become internal and more complex. The role of non-State actors, in particular terrorist organizations, armed groups and organized criminal gangs, has increased. They exploit the phenomena of exclusion and marginalization to fuel conflicts and crises and attract marginalized groups while undermining the process of achieving security, peace and stability. Among the most important factors of marginalization and exclusion are identity-related issues, including racial, religious and gender identities, as well as those related to the economic and development dimensions.

In that context, we reiterate Tunisia's appreciation for a view within the Council of the necessary approach to promoting international peace and security, in particular the adoption of the women and peace and security and youth, peace and security agendas. We also emphasize the need to focus more on the development, human rights and climate change dimensions as necessary components for achieving peace and security, particularly through a participatory approach that ensures the participation of all sectors in all phases of achieving and building peace.

Such an approach will increase the resilience of communities and their cohesion and will protect them against fragmentation and division based on exclusion and marginalization. It will also increase the capacity

of communities to address all challenges and threats to security and stability

In that regard, we underscore the importance of Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to the achievement of sustainable peace by promoting solidarity, strengthening the credibility of Governments and building their capacities to contain and manage differences and diversity, promote dialogue and equality while focusing on common values and destiny, legal identity of all members of the society, leading to a tangible change in people's lives. Peace and security cannot be achieved without sustainable development. Accordingly, development cannot be achieved without peace. Realizing justice for all and combating exclusion and inequality are necessary empowering factors for the attainment of more stable and sustained societies.

Reports indicate the proliferation of crises and conflicts in many regions of the world, in particular in the Middle East and the African continent. Humanitarian needs have reached their highest level since the Second World War. The number of people threatened by famine has increased, and extreme poverty has expanded. Those factors all lead to marginalization, inequality and deprivation. We therefore reiterate the need to step up cooperation so as to resolve existing conflicts and address all their security, social and humanitarian repercussions.

We also emphasize the need to promote monitoring and early-warning plans and mechanisms to prevent crises and address their causes by strengthening coordination among United Nations missions and Resident Coordinators, as well as Governments and civil society.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has exacerbated the global situation, with its effects at various levels. It has contributed to widening gaps among and within States. We therefore reiterate the need to intensify international cooperation and human solidarity in order to mitigate such effects. The recovery stage must include all peoples and States without exception, in particular developing and least developed countries. The pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on human rights, equality and development across the world. It has led to a global recession and exhausted resources of Governments and societies, pushing millions into poverty and hampering the right to health and education. It has also worsened marginalization

and exclusion of vulnerable and weak communities. If unaddressed, such effects will undermine our gains in several areas, threatening international peace and security in the long term.

In conclusion, we express our support for the Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* and his call to increase efforts to break the cycle of poverty, exclusion discrimination and conflict while avoiding the compounded impact of sustained emergencies, which drain resources of many countries worldwide, especially in the African continent. In that context, we recall the high-level debate convened by Tunisia during its presidency of the Security Council in January on the challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts (see S/2021/24). In that regard, we reiterate Tunisia's firm commitment to continuing its active contribution in the service of international peace and security.

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for bringing this important discussion to the Security Council. I also thank the Secretary-General and Ms. Tibán Guala for their briefings.

Systemic inequality and exclusion are often significant drivers of insecurity and protracted internal conflicts. Addressing those elements is critical to building sustainable peace. The crisis in Ethiopia will be resolved only through an inclusive dialogue. True stability in Afghanistan will be possible only with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls.

As the Secretary-General has said, development is the best form of prevention. But development done poorly is not the master key to unlocking all problems. To be effective and sustainable, it needs to simultaneously address the root causes of conflicts, including social, economic and political exclusion.

Inclusive governance through democratic elections is critical to allowing societies to manage challenges peacefully. Human rights play a key role in creating resilient societies. Human rights violations alert us to rising conflict and atrocity risks.

I will make three brief points that are particularly relevant to the Security Council.

First, we can do more to promote coherent international assistance that better protects and reinforces peace, development and human rights gains. Peace needs to be nationally owned and nurtured. States

have a responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations to meet their commitments and demonstrate the political will to resolve threats to peace.

However, the Security Council can work more actively to break down the silos that impede prevention efforts. It means advocating for more coordinated and conflict-sensitive United Nations assistance and supporting better analysis and early warning so that risks can be addressed before the Council is compelled to take action. The United Kingdom supports the flexible deployment of tools available to the United Nations to assist countries with nationally driven solutions to their peacebuilding challenges, including the Peacebuilding Commission.

Secondly, in peacekeeping and special political missions, the Council should ensure that United Nations peace operations have a more holistic understanding of the drivers of conflict and that they better coordinate with local, national, regional and international peacebuilding actors. The voices of civil society can lend critical insights for the Council's consideration, as demonstrated by Ms. Tibán Guala's testimony today.

Thirdly, and lastly, when conflicts escalate, the Council should not side-step its responsibility. When inequality and exclusion transform into atrocities that breach agreed international norms and threaten international peace and security, we have an obligation to act and prevent further humanitarian crises.

It is in all our interests that countries and their people be empowered to foster equitable, inclusive and open societies.

**Ms. King** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): At the outset, let me commend the delegation of Mexico — our brothers and sisters by virtue of the shared histories, identities and possibilities of our Americas — for convening today's open debate. I thank you, President López Obrador, for a most memorable statement earlier. I also thank the briefers for their remarks.

The linkages among inequality, exclusion and conflict have long been established. Security risks are often materialized amid striking disparities that stoke social divisions, obstruct social mediation and expose the foundations on which peaceful societies are erected. In fragile contexts, where socioeconomic and political marginalization and the human hardships occasioned by underdevelopment are most pronounced, such inequalities foment disputes that, all too frequently,

metamorphose into violent conflict. They also create fertile breeding ground for extremist ideologies, terrorist activity and transnational organized crime, all of which serve to undermine State sovereignty, circumvent territorial integrity and erode the prospects for lasting peace and development.

Greater efforts are clearly needed in terms of both political will and developmental initiatives to repair social fractures, strengthen institutions and bolster national ownership of peace processes. That is the most effective means of advancing the pacific settlement of conflicts. Indeed, as many States in post-conflict situations could attest, only when social fabrics are mended, public trust is restored and national processes of political dialogue, consensus-building and reconciliation are earnestly pursued, will the deep fissures that breed unrest and instability be finally and conclusively repaired.

It is unfortunate, to say the least, that, during this age of scientific advancement and the global expansion of individual freedoms, so many structural disparities exist across our societies and among our respective nations. This unbalanced global development, which manifests itself in severe health, economic, social and security challenges, represents a moral blemish in the face of the multilateral order. Undoubtedly, against the stark backdrop of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the growing climate crisis and protracted conflicts, all of which disproportionately and unfairly affect developing countries, the time is upon us to fashion a fairer and more inclusive multilateralism.

All organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations must work more closely together, with the support of Member States, regional and subregional organizations and the international financial institutions, to advance practical and people-centred solutions across the peace and security-development-humanitarian nexus. Developed countries should scale up their overseas development assistance commitments, and counterproductive measures, in particular unilateral sanctions, spurious blacklists and other forms of economic sabotage, should be withdrawn. We cannot successfully tackle exclusion within countries as long as such exclusionary and discriminatory practices are maintained by some members of the international community.

No thesis of exclusion, inequality and conflict, in the academic world or our practical diplomatic affairs,

would be complete without due consideration to the ignoble roles of past empires and some present-day Powers. Reparatory justice for the historical abuses of chattel slavery and native genocide, from which lasting legacies of underdevelopment and inequality have emerged, remain an urgent priority. In our deliberations as the Council, we must always bear in mind the legitimate voices and perspectives of the disempowered — stateless persons, refugees, internally displaced people, the indigenous, other ethnic and religious minorities, women, girls and those who suffer the worst effects of COVID-19, climate change and environmental degradation, including small island developing States.

The peoples of Haiti, the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin region, as do those elsewhere, deserve a more just and equitable social and political order in which the fruits of human ingenuity, including COVID-19 vaccines, are made readily available to all. During the pivotal decade of action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, let us work together to deliver peace, security and prosperity to all humankind, without exception or exclusion.

In conclusion, I echo your profound words, Mr. President: only by being good can we be happy.

**Mr. Dang** (Viet Nam): Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General for his insightful remarks, and Ms. Tibán Guala for sharing her thoughts. We also thank the Mexican presidency for convening this very important open debate. We sincerely thank you, Mr. President, for your insightful remarks and for presiding over this debate.

In many conflict situations, it has been shown that inequalities and exclusion can drive or exacerbate the underlying root causes of armed conflicts. Social and economic inequalities and political divides, both within and among countries, can cause grievances, fuel tension and create a tinderbox for violence and conflict. They are further compounded by other stressors, such as chronic poverty, the lack of economic development, food and water insecurity, climate change and, currently, the coronavirus disease pandemic.

They add complications to serious threats and challenges that the international community has continued to face as a result of power politics, unilateral coercion, impositions and violations of international law that have acted as systematic drivers of tension, conflicts and confrontations. Furthermore, we all know

that very few conflicts end simply with the signing of a peace agreement. In the aftermath of conflicts, damage to infrastructure, the deprivation of essential services and the lack of development opportunities can jeopardize reconstruction and development efforts.

On several occasions, the Security Council has recognized the interlinkages between peace and sustainable development. Therefore, it is essential to address not only the symptoms and consequences, but also the underlying root causes of conflict as a preventive measure in order to preserve and sustain hard-won peace and development gains. In that regard, I would like to highlight four points.

First, as the primary guardian of international peace and security, the Security Council must continue to uphold the Charter of the United Nations, including its purposes and principles, and an international order based on international law, which is the indispensable foundation for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world where States coexist peacefully.

Secondly, a coordinated approach requires the Security Council to work together with other entities in the United Nations system, including the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations country teams and other development partners, in accordance with their respective mandates. We also highly value the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission. In that connection, regional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter, can play a complementary role in maintaining international peace and security. In our region, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has affirmed its centrality in the regional security architecture, for example, in preventing and resolving conflicts and addressing regional and international issues.

Thirdly, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development continues to be our utmost priority. More innovative financing to address inequality and support sustainable development should be considered. In post-conflict situations, sustainable development is crucial for national reconciliation. That is the first-hand experience that my country can share, having gone through its own course of reconstruction, recovery and development from a war-torn and underdeveloped nation to a middle-income country.

Fourthly, in capacity-building, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Assistance to States must respect State sovereignty and be based on national

strategies, plans and priorities, while taking into full consideration cultural and historical perspectives and ensuring national ownership. Such an approach, premised on national specificities and needs, also allows us to focus on the groups most vulnerable to inequalities and exclusion in specific contexts.

Given our national experiences and history, Viet Nam values and remains committed to being a reliable partner for sustainable peace and development.

**Ms. Byrne Nason** (Ireland): I would like to thank Mexico and you personally, President López Obrador, for being with us today and for bringing this important item to the Council.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his insightful briefing. I thank, in particular, Ms. Lourdes Tibán Guala for the powerful messages she gave us at the beginning of the meeting. We listened attentively to those messages.

Ireland's own President, Michael D. Higgins, in his recent statement celebrating 200 years of Mexican independence, noted the striking parallels in the histories of Mexico and Ireland, which include colonization, emigration, poverty and exclusion. Those are features that mark both of our histories but also unite Irish and Mexican people. They also form a particularly relevant backdrop for our discussion here today.

Let us admit that today the Security Council does not effectively address the root causes of conflict. Today's debate and your own thoughtful statement, Mr. President, highlight the gaps and the urgent critical need to further the preventive agenda of the Council and ensure that, as the Security Council, we avoid the struggle under way now to move beyond simply reacting to crises.

The value Ireland places on that issue is reflected in how we approach our role at this table. It is reflected in how we approach our work on climate and security, conflict and hunger, women and peace and security, human rights and peacekeeping. We believe that the Council must take those issues into the heart of our agenda to ensure effective prevention and transitions to peace, particularly in contexts where we move from peacekeeping to peacebuilding.

In our view, it is not just the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do. We know that on average, early preventive action to avert war and mass atrocities can cost as much as 60 times less than late response and

military intervention. Daily, at this very table, we deal with the result of the Security Council doing too little, too late. Whether in relation to climate-related risks, the collapse of food systems, endemic corruption, which you, Mr. President, highlighted in your remarks, exclusionary politics or the human rights and protection landscape, we truly need to recognize what is now increasingly so obvious — non-traditional challenges are increasingly and rapidly impacting not just peace and security; they are also a drag on our capacity to address those challenges.

As others have said today, the adverse effects of climate change are being felt across the globe, from the Sahel to small island developing States. It leads to sea level rise, displacement and competition over resources, thereby contributing to instability and increasing tensions.

As we discussed here just last month, under Kenya's presidency, the Great Lakes region is facing a host of complex and interlinked crises (see S/PV.8884), including persistent violence and insecurity, illegal exploitation and trade of natural resources, a cycle of conflict and hunger, staggeringly high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition, as well as extreme poverty, exclusion and inequality. Failing to address those issues is nothing less than an abdication of our responsibility.

Ireland believes that a coordinated and partnership-based approach across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus will enable us to anticipate and respond to emerging threats before they lead to conflicts on our agenda. It can help us to extinguish the sparks that might otherwise become flames. It can also help us hold ourselves to account against the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

We have also seen in countries, such as Timor-Leste, a positive example of how suitable anticipatory actions, early response and inclusive political engagement can generate robust peace. As is often stated, there is no peace without development and no development without peace.

We should be under no illusion that the glaring examples of poverty, exclusion and inequality we see around us, exacerbated by the coronavirus disease pandemic and ever-increasing climate risks are not contributing to international insecurity. The exclusion of women, too, in peacebuilding contexts is deeply damaging. The evidence shows that women's participation in peace processes leads to better

outcomes in the substance and quality of peace agreements, as well as their durability. As the Council has heard before, in all peace and political processes that the United Nations leads or co-leads, women's participation must be full, equal and meaningful. We know that well in Ireland from our own experience.

Other speakers have reminded us of the alarming array of humanitarian crises and human rights violations in conflict settings on our agenda today. It is a grim reminder that the Security Council is not effectively addressing the root causes of conflict. In the past month alone, in the Chamber, we have discussed acute humanitarian emergencies in Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Mali and beyond.

In order to remain credible — I would argue in order to meet our responsibilities — the Council must work better with other parts of the United Nations system, notably the Peacebuilding Commission, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. We must continue to provide platforms and listen to civilians, such as Lourdes Tibán Guala, earlier today, who have an amplified voice, in the Council, and show us that the Council can meet its responsibility to strive to protect those who are most affected by its work.

As our President noted in his recent message to you, President López Obrador, Ireland shares with Mexico a common wish to

“advance the role of women in peace processes, advocate for the peaceful settlement of disputes, ensure respect for the rule of law and promote the protection of vulnerable groups and civilians in armed conflict”.

I am therefore grateful to you, Mr. President, that today's open debate today allows for a refreshing and, at times, provocative discussion that reflects our shared aspirations.

**Mr. Maman Sani** (Niger) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important high-level debate on the issues of exclusion, inequality and armed conflicts. This meeting is most timely, given that many analyses have shown that exclusion and inequality lead to social unrest. Therefore, a judicious treatment of those factors remains the best way to avoid the societal crises that often lead to armed conflicts.

I would like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres and Ms. Lourdes Tibán Guala, expert on indigenous affairs, for their enlightening briefings.

The debate on the causes of conflict is increasingly linking social exclusion to violent conflict, hence why Governments need to put appropriate policies in place to reduce exclusion and inequality between communities within their nations and, in doing so, create a sense of belonging for every citizen.

With the advent of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, those inequalities have been exacerbated. While the low rate of infection in the Sahel region is to be welcomed, the severe economic crisis caused by lockdown measures and other responses to the pandemic have unfortunately exacerbated pre-existing social inequalities and exclusion. While already facing cash-flow pressures due to heavy yet necessary security investments, our States are now facing declining tax revenues, a large budget deficit, the deterioration of basic social sectors and rising unemployment — all of which would reverse the hard-won economic gains of recent years.

In addition, we are also dealing with the climate crisis. Despite being responsible for less than 1 per cent of total emissions, the Sahel is one of the regions of the world most affected by the consequences of climate change.

The combination of those factors, as we all know, has resulted in increased social inequalities, disproportionately affecting women, young people and rural and insecure communities. Therefore, in order to address those governance challenges, it is imperative now more so than ever to create a new social contract that meets citizens' needs and integrates the work of the United Nations through the interdependent pillars of our work, namely, peace, development and human rights.

With that in mind, allow me to make a few suggestions as to how the Security Council might approach the issue.

First, there is now a need for a coherent and integrated approach to better integrate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into our various development and peacebuilding policies and strategies. In that respect, the United Nations must support the actions of Governments of countries in situations of fragility, as well as local actors and subregional and regional organizations.

Secondly, we must invest in capacity development and the strengthening of national institutions. In order to do so, fairer and more inclusive governance is required, as is the development of regulatory, legal and policy frameworks and social institutions that reduce inequalities in all areas of public, economic and political life.

Thirdly, as we have mentioned on many occasions, the time has come to reform the global governance system, including the United Nations and the Security Council, so as to strengthen its role and equip it to adequately fulfil its tasks. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us the inadequacies of our current governance system, the tools of which are no longer adapted to meet new and emerging challenges.

In conclusion, and while the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is being held, my delegation would like to stress the importance of the debate on climate change and its multifaceted effects, particularly on the stability of countries in conflict situations. We call on those countries that are major emitters to meet their commitments to finance resilience and adaptation. It is equally important and high time that the security risks of climate change were effectively integrated into stabilization and peacekeeping operations.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a further statement in my capacity as the representative of Mexico.

I would like to thank all 15 members of the Security Council for allowing me to preside over this meeting and agreeing to debate the topic of corruption and inequality. I also thank the representatives of the other Member States participating today.

By way of summarizing the debate, I would like to make it clear that corruption is the principal cause of socioeconomic inequality. Furthermore, peace is borne of justice. It is my hope that, once our global initiative for fraternity and well-being is announced, it will be met with great support.

On behalf of the Government that I represent and the people of Mexico, I wish to express my warmest greetings to all Governments and peoples of the world.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Flashing lights on the collars of the microphones will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after four minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

**Mr. Rodríguez Cuadros** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Mexican Government on its presidency of the Security Council. In particular, I would like to congratulate President Andrés Manuel López Obrador for taking the initiative to convene this meeting, which gives us the opportunity to jointly assess exclusion, inequality and poverty as structural causes of conflict and their structural links to peace.

Peace is not just the control or suppression of conflict and the threat and use of force — it is essentially a form of social coexistence. It is based on the recognition of the human dignity of all and therefore on a societal order founded on social cohesion, a fair distribution of wealth, access to opportunities for all, equal relations and the absence of discrimination and exclusion.

The current in-transition international system, characterized by instability and inequality between nations and between social sectors within States, requires a new global governance system that builds peace from a multidimensional structural perspective.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has dramatically, clearly and no less realistically revealed the social fractures of today's world. It has shown the inadequacy of the market to generate both progress in equality and wealth and its fair distribution. On the contrary, the pandemic has shown that the appearance of growth without inclusion concealed enormous social inequalities in access to power and income, not just in developing countries, but also in the most industrialized nations with the highest income levels; gaps in health systems and social protection, environmental degradation and the climate crisis that is currently being debated in Glasgow. Between immobility and ambitions far removed from the demands of climate urgency, inequality in access to decent and dignified work and gender inequalities have deepened with the economic crisis that produced the most recessionary pandemic since the Second World War. Entire regions, including Latin America, which had made substantial progress in the fight against poverty and extreme

poverty, have fallen years behind in terms of achieving their development goals. Social and national cohesion has been severely affected, creating conditions for the exacerbation of conflicts, including migration crises.

The crisis of inequality is the crisis of our time. I believe that the demand for peace based on the people's living conditions reflects the mood and the hope of millions of citizens around the world who aspire to seeing political leaders committed to representing their individual and collective interests and to putting people's daily lives, the overcoming of shortfalls and the realization of their aspirations on the world peace agenda.

Peru underlines the importance of prioritizing, in the context of multilateral governance, the convergence of efforts aimed at preventing the emergence of threats to international peace and security through appropriate management of structural causes of conflict. We must not restrict peacekeeping to the indispensable and imperative agendas of pacification, stabilization and the construction of a post-conflict institutional order: it is also crucial to address problems of human development and the realization of people's economic and social rights. The no-conflict agenda must go hand in hand with the inclusive-social-development agenda and provide marginalized, vulnerable and excluded sectors with access to decision-making about their own lives. Peace must be inclusive; it is a right that belongs to everyone.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

**Mr. Abushahab** (United Arab Emirates): At the outset, the United Arab Emirates would like to thank Mexico for organizing today's meeting. We would also like to thank President Andrés Manuel López Obrador for presiding over this debate. We also extend our thanks to Secretary-General António Guterres and Ms. Lourdes Tibán Guala for their important briefings.

Addressing the root causes of conflict, particularly those that exacerbate discrimination and widen inequality gaps within societies, has proven to be one of the most effective ways to maintain international peace and security. That has become even more apparent with the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic, which continues to highlight exclusion within societies. It is critical for the Security Council to bring these issues to the forefront in order to focus on preventive action.

The United Arab Emirates would like to draw attention to four areas that are crucial for addressing exclusion, inequality and poverty in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

First, Governments have the primary responsibility to provide educational and economic opportunities for all. Such Government-led action can prevent widening inequality gaps and, in turn, address the long-standing drivers of conflict. To that end, it is critical to ensure the inclusion and engagement of women and youth in both national strategies and measures to build resilience that guarantees stable, prosperous and peaceful societies.

Secondly, the Council must ensure that strategies and mandates of peace operations are designed for — and with — local communities from the outset. Mandates should include perspectives from a broad range of local grass-roots actors, particularly women and youth leaders, to directly incorporate and address their needs and eliminate risks of exclusion or discrimination. We recognize the importance of the Peacebuilding Commission and the significant value its recommendations can add to the Council's work. Inclusion of these different perspectives can deliver durable, nationally owned solutions to tackle deeply rooted challenges. This is a key element of successful and sustainable conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Thirdly, developing strategies that embed a rule-of-law approach in conflict and post-conflict settings will guarantee long-term stability, but that requires a coordinated response. As United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions work on the ground with various communities, it is equally as important for them to build local capacity to uphold and strengthen the rule of law. By providing advice, training and technical support, missions can create the necessary conditions to re-establish the rule of law, and in turn, protect civilians, pave the way to peacebuilding and reconstruct communities.

Finally, fighting corruption remains critical to maintaining good governance and the rule of law. Mechanisms like the United Nations Convention against Corruption and its Abu Dhabi declaration of 2019 provide important obligations and commitments for States parties, particularly with respect to regional and international cooperation and exchanging information related to corruption. We also encourage States to support the important work of the United Nations

Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in providing technical assistance. Earlier this year, the United Arab Emirates signed an agreement with UNODC to establish a programme to support the implementation of the Abu Dhabi declaration.

Beginning in January, the United Arab Emirates upcoming Security Council term will be guided by the pillars of advancing inclusion and building resilience. We remain committed to driving these concepts forward in our contribution to conflict prevention and resolution.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Malta.

**Mrs. Frazier** (Malta): I begin by congratulating Mexico on assuming the presidency of the Security Council, and by thanking the Mexican delegation for organizing today's open debate on exclusion, inequality and conflict.

Discussing the root causes of conflict and their impacts on peace and security is of fundamental importance for gaining a better understanding of any given situation and for developing holistic and inclusive solutions to emerging threats and complex conflicts. Time and again, in different parts of the world, we have seen the consequences of social exclusion, particularly when entire groups of the population are denied the right to exercise their rights and freedoms or are prevented from engaging in the political process and decision-making. Such conditions, especially when combined, may provide fertile ground for violent conflicts. Identifying these trends and addressing them in a timely manner can therefore play an important part in conflict prevention.

International peace and the promotion and protection of human rights are both goals and processes towards building more resilient, inclusive and peaceful societies, for which the primary responsibility rests with States. The women and peace and security agenda demonstrates that ensuring the human rights of women and girls is intrinsically linked to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We must create the conditions on the ground that will be conducive to women's and girls' full, effective and meaningful participation.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has unleashed devastating effects that continue to hamper the Sustainable Development Goals globally, slowing or reversing years of hard-earned economic growth

and social progress. Many developing countries are trapped in a vicious cycle of economic challenges, with further stresses on their health-care systems. In a world confronted with growing inequalities, environmental threats and climate change, the international community should continue to underpin its post-pandemic recovery on the 2030 Agenda.

The impact of continued exclusion and inequality on the maintenance of international peace and security is magnified by the historically high humanitarian needs in a number of contexts. Enhancing State capacity to address humanitarian needs, while also ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law and its guiding principles, remains essential. Failure to cater to the fundamental needs of civilian populations in humanitarian crises only serves to increase poverty levels and further entrenches sentiments of exclusion and inequality. This reality should also underline the relevance of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the need to explore synergies between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding entities.

Over the past few years, we have also seen an increase in rhetoric aimed at dehumanizing ethnic, religious and other vulnerable groups and minorities. Such discourse, which exploits and deepens existing fractures in society through the spreading of falsehoods and misconceptions, has become even more apparent with the advent of social media. The use of social media to promote hate speech, racism, xenophobia and intolerance should not be taken lightly. Efforts must also be made to make sure that our citizens have access to factual and accurate information. To that end, we highlight once again the importance of partnerships with civil society, the private sector and social media companies.

Education is central in countering this phenomenon, and that is why we will also focus on promoting the importance of literacy if entrusted to serve on the Security Council in 2023-2024. Literacy empowers all members of society, including by providing youths with the necessary tools to thrive and contribute to the economic growth of their communities. It also allows people to analyse information, question sources and counter disinformation, making them less susceptible to fall for the rhetoric of extremist groups.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**Mr. Takht Ravanchi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I congratulate Mexico on assuming the Council presidency for this month and I thank you, Sir, for organizing this open debate.

Issues such as exclusion and inequality can act as potential drivers and aggravating factors for conflicts and weaken opportunities to achieve lasting peace in conflict-ridden countries. According to United Nations reports, the provision of humanitarian needs in conflict situations has been on the rise and is today at the highest level.

Humanitarian assistance can treat the symptoms but cannot cure the disease. Therefore, prevention is always better than cure. In this context, the prevention of conflicts is one of the main obligations set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, and the primary responsibility for this obligation has been assigned to Member States. Tackling such challenges, which are essentially internal matters of countries, requires an integrated and holistic approach and should be dealt with by the States concerned.

Nevertheless, the international community also needs to be involved in addressing such challenges. The international community and the United Nations must assist conflict-affected countries, upon their request, through the provision of tailored technical and financial supports to address the root causes of conflicts properly and more effectively. As stated in Sustainable Development Goal 10, reducing poverty and inequality and ensuring that no one is left behind is integral to achieving the sustainable development. We highlight the significant role of the United Nations in this regard.

For the effective prevention of conflicts, other underlying causes — such as climate change, foreign intervention and occupation, as well as the application of unilateral acts — that lead to prolonged conflict situations must also be considered and tackled. In this context, the imposition of unilateral coercive measures, such as illegal sanctions imposed by the United States on the Iranian people, has serious consequences for the well-being of all segments of the population. These unlawful acts, which have caused severe shortages in the basic needs of the people, especially medicines and medical equipment needed for combating the coronavirus disease, exacerbate economic hardship. Unilateral sanctions also prevent access of the affecting countries to the financial and development resources

necessary for their realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The provision of technical and humanitarian assistance to people in need in conflict and post-conflict situations should in no way be politicized, conditional or discriminatory. The constructive contribution of the United Nations to preventing conflicts requires coherence, sustained engagement and coordination among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, consistent with their mandates, as set out in the Charter of the United Nations. In this context, we emphasize that the Security Council must adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and should focus its efforts on any situation that is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. Issues with social and economic aspects, such as exclusion and inequality, must be addressed by the competent organs of the United Nations, namely, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

**Mr. Skoknic Tapia** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mexico for its initiative to organize this debate in the Security Council on exclusion, inequality and conflict. I am also grateful to the President of Mexico for being here to chair this meeting.

Chile is aware that the reflection on the link among exclusion, inequity and the generation of conflicts has been an important part of a series of discussions in the multilateral sphere, particularly since the United Nations Development Programme coined the concept of “human security” in 1994.

We have seen how so-called traditional threats to security have often been replaced by the threats of a non-State and non-military nature. These are challenges that no State can ignore and that are linked to intra-national guerrillas and transnational dangers, such as terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, human trafficking, money-laundering and arms trafficking, among others. Such threats also include natural disasters, the spread of diseases and pandemics, and the deterioration of the environment.

That is why, if we are to understand and face these challenges, a multidimensional approach must be adopted and the causes of exclusion, inequality and conflict must be understood. History teaches that

these are due to socioeconomic, gender, ethnic, tribal, religious or ideological tensions, lack of opportunities and the immutable nature of the social structure, among others. It is precisely in this Security Council that we have witnessed how, at times, these local tensions have quickly led to situations of regional or global concern.

Chile reiterates that any emphasis on and broad conception of security must put the person and her or his well-being at the centre of the concerns of States and the community of nations. In that regard, early warnings and conflict prevention are paramount. We note that there are effective tools to that end and to consolidate peace, strengthen democracy and the rule of law, safeguard individual freedoms and, ultimately, build more just societies. In this sense, Governments must work with a sense of urgency to resolve and advance issues such as social cohesion, education and probity, which constitute basic elements of the institutional strength and resilience capacity of a State, as well as of its ability to protect against possible external threats.

It is essential to address all conflicts in their social complexity and bearing in mind the three pillars of the United Nations: international peace and security, sustainable development, and unrestricted respect for human rights. Chile calls for progress on the path of peace and stability, fostering the construction of inclusive and resilient societies, which is imperative in a world convulsed by the effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic. We are more aware than ever that that can be achieved only through multilateral and bilateral cooperation. Acting together will allow us to strengthen the virtuous cycles between peace and development.

As a final reflection, I would like to point out that, in Latin America, it is evident that we are part of a zone of peace, with one of the lowest defence expenditures in the world and free of nuclear weapons and traditional warlike conflicts. However, it is a highly complex area, with high crime rates and a significant development of transnational organized crime. We must therefore do our utmost, as societies, to mitigate and, ultimately, eradicate these threats.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

**Mr. Othman** (Malaysia): Malaysia welcomes today's discussion as we continue to witness new and re-emerging conflicts around the world. We hope that our deliberations today will enable the Security Council and relevant States to strengthen efforts towards the

culture of prevention over the culture of reacting to conflict. I wish to frame my intervention today in two dimensions.

First, on the role of national Government, it is evident that exclusion, inequality and conflict are inextricably connected. Hence it is paramount for Member States to spare no effort in identifying and addressing factors or conditions that build inequality, exclusion and division in their societies. That is particularly more challenging in multicultural and multi-ethnic countries when certain constituents of the society feel that they are being marginalized or excluded.

Malaysia also believes that addressing sociopolitical and socioeconomic fragility must be a strategic priority for the national Government to sustain peace and stability, which would, in turn, allow conditions for sustainable development. If not addressed comprehensively, it could lead to political fragmentation, as well as social strife and, eventually, armed conflict.

In order to cement peacebuilding and nation-building efforts, inclusiveness must also go hand-in-hand with other equally essential values and principles, including tolerance and moderation. Efforts must be made to advocate for unity in diversity and in the strengthening of national integration and stability.

Malaysia supports the call to include a broad range of actors in national peace and political transition processes. In particular, we stress the importance of gender inclusivity. The involvement of women in conflict prevention and resolution, including in political and social-economic participation, would promote stability and reduce the risk of the re-emergence of conflict. In addition, we underscore the critical role of youth in these processes, particularly on social cohesion.

My second point is on the role of the international community. While we stress that national ownership is fundamental in ending conflict, ensuring sustainable peace requires the strong support of the international community. In that context, the Security Council is well placed to play its pivotal role in supporting such efforts, including through special political missions and peacekeeping missions. We also believe that the Security Council would continue to benefit from its partnership with other United Nations organs, including the Peacebuilding Commission, and regional organizations.

However, we wish to underscore the critical importance for international partners to work closely with local stakeholders. It is essential for international actors to fully understand the local contexts and specific societal dynamics in formulating strategies for conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. Without such understanding and proper contexts, our actions and approaches may inadvertently contribute to promoting or prolonging inequality and exclusion in affected communities.

At the same time, Malaysia believes that it is essential for the international community, including the Security Council, to uphold the rule of law and accountability through the full implementation of Security Council resolutions.

In conclusion, Malaysia stresses the importance of promoting the principles of equality and inclusivity for sustainable peace. The Security Council must lead efforts to promote those principles and the holistic vision of international security based on the interdependence of the three pillars of the United Nations.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

**Mr. Ishikane** (Japan): I would like to express my appreciation to Your Excellency, Mr. Andrés Manuel López Obrador, President of Mexico, for convening this open debate and giving us an opportunity to renew our commitment to addressing the root causes of conflict, namely, exclusion, inequality and poverty.

Today the world remains beset by multiple conflicts. The scourge of conflicts is exacerbated by the impacts of the coronavirus disease pandemic and climate change. We must ask ourselves why we are still far from achieving the aims of the Organization. The international community still focuses heavily on responding to conflicts, rather than on preventing them. This approach is costing people their lives, livelihoods and dignity. We must shift our focus to prevention and effectively address the root causes of conflict. I would like to make four points in that regard.

First, trust is key to building peaceful societies. By trust I mean that people must have confidence both in their Government and in each other. Systematic exclusion and widening inequality fuel people's resentment against the Government, create tensions between communities and aggravate human insecurity.

Secondly, in order to cultivate trust, it is essential to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions

at the national and local levels in order to ensure equal opportunity and human security for all segments of society. Effective and impartial institutions in the security and judicial sectors are indispensable for ensuring the rule of law, combating impunity and tackling corruption. Institutions to ensure equal access to basic social services reduce grievances and mitigate intercommunal tensions. Building the capacity of the personnel in charge of managing the institutions is an integral part of institution-building.

Thirdly, the voices of women, youth and marginalized groups must be heard. We will never be able to achieve just, peaceful and inclusive societies without their full, equal and meaningful participation. We have to empower them and promote their critical role.

Lastly, when it comes to the role of the United Nations, a holistic and coordinated approach is essential. Its interventions must be coherent across the nexus of peace and security, development, humanitarian issues and human rights. Such an approach should extend beyond the United Nations system to build partnerships with diverse international, regional and national actors, with a view to promoting coordinated and coherent actions.

We are encouraged to see the Security Council actively incorporating human-security perspectives — such as the protection of civilians, with particular attention to vulnerable groups and gender equality — in its resolutions for the renewal of mandates of peacekeeping missions and special political missions. That is particularly true in recent years.

The Peacebuilding Commission has also evolved into an accelerator of those important efforts and a platform for broad partnerships among various actors. The Commission's bottom-up approach, engaging with local women and youth peacebuilders, provides invaluable insights to its advice to the Council. The Council should more actively seek the Commission's advice in order to ensure coherent system-wide efforts and to better incorporate the local perspectives into its work.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

*The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m.*