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Provisional

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New York

President: Mr. Araud (France)

Members:

Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
Australia	Mr. Quinlan
Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungerehe
Togo	Mr. Menan
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

The President (*spoke in French*): I wish to welcome the Secretary-General and other eminent representatives participating in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank, to participate in this meeting. I welcome Mr. Kim, who will participate via video-teleconference.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following persons to participate in this meeting: Mr. Romano Prodi, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel; Ambassador Mr. Tété António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations; Mr. Michel Reveyrand-de Menthon, European Union Special Representative for the Sahel.

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

I give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General (*spoke in French*): I express my deepest thanks to you, Mr. President, for having organized the present meeting. We are gathered here to uphold our commitment to the population of the Sahel at a time when the needs are immense.

This meeting of the Security Council follows my visit to Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad last month with the President of the African Union Commission, the President of the World Bank, the President of the African Development Bank and the European Commissioner for Development. We visited those countries to demonstrate our solidarity, underscore the links between peace and development, and make a commitment to continue our support.

During that visit, the World Bank and the European Union pledged to provide more than \$8.2 billion to the region. We will hear in some detail today how those funds will be disbursed. In addition, we will hear a briefing by my Special Envoy, Mr. Romano Prodi, on the progress we have made in the implementation of the

United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. The representative of the African Union, Mr. Tété António, will present the point of view of the continent on all of these elements.

At every stop during the visit, I had in-depth exchanges with national leaders, who are working to meet the challenges and find solutions.

(spoke in English)

We took an important first step in Mali at the regional meeting. African ministers as well as regional and international organizations and financial institutions came together to improve coordination and address the Sahel's fragility. They welcomed the African Development Bank's establishment of an action fund, which will help jump-start underfunded projects and contribute to longer-term development. Going forward, the ministers will meet twice a year to calibrate responses to the Sahel's challenges.

I also had a very moving visit to Timbuktu. People there are struggling to recover from human rights abuses and upheaval. I was given an opportunity to view the cultural treasures that had been damaged in the attacks. This was a terrible loss for Mali and for our common global heritage, but with UNESCO's help, we are moving to safeguard that heritage. I condemn all attacks against places of worship and call for reconciliation and accountability.

We must continue to strengthen the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. Mali has made progress toward re-establishing constitutional order. The first round of legislative elections was conducted in an orderly manner. But the political process between the Government and armed groups has been delayed. I remain concerned about the security situation in the north.

Across the region, terrorist acts, the trafficking of arms, drugs and people and other transnational forms of organized crime, are threatening security. We must do more to address the food crises that plague the Sahel. We also have to improve conditions in migrants' communities of origin while also generating more legal opportunities for migrants to work abroad. The Sahel's vast size and long, porous borders mean that such challenges can be addressed successfully only if the countries of the region work together. The United Nations will continue its efforts to promote security, good governance and resilience.

I came back from the visit with a clear sense that we need to do much more to fight poverty, empower women, provide employment opportunities for young people and ensure that all the people of the Sahel have what they need to build a better future. I look forward to hearing the views of Council members on how we can achieve that, and I count on all partners to live up to their promises so that this important vision can break the cycle of poverty and insecurity and usher in an era of prosperity and stability for all.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Jim Yong Kim.

Mr. Jim Yong Kim: It is a pleasure and a privilege to take part in this briefing, and I thank you, Sir, for the invitation.

As the Secretary-General noted, the joint trip to the Sahel was a historic opportunity to bring international attention to an often neglected region. We are all so grateful to the Secretary-General for his leadership in bringing together the United Nations, the African Union, the African Development Bank, the European Union and the World Bank Group on this trip, showing a unified front of support for the Sahel.

All of us should also express our deep gratitude to the Government of France and President Hollande for their courageous decision to send French troops to help stabilize much of the Sahel. Without those troops, our joint mission, led by the Secretary-General, likely never could have happened. We are also very grateful for the good work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, which we witnessed directly on the trip.

Our message today should be unequivocal. The world will support the Sahel. Our joint visit last month gave us all a better idea of the challenges facing the people and the leaders of the Sahel. It made me even more convinced that if we work together, we can offer sustainable and potentially transformative solutions to the problems of the region. I left the Sahel full of hope and optimism. One of the conclusions we drew from our visit is that there is a need for a coordinated and regional approach to tackling the major development challenges of the region. The recent formation of the coordination platform is exactly what that region needs. Foreign ministers from the Sahel countries will meet every six months to decide common priorities, and we

welcome Mali's leadership in chairing the coordination platform for its first two years.

During the trip, the World Bank Group committed \$1.5 billion to new regional investments over the next two years. That is in addition to significant existing country programmes. Those new funds will support major regional development priorities, such as social safety nets to help families withstand the worst effects of economic adversity and disasters. They will also support the private sector by encouraging entrepreneurship and an improved investment climate. I am very happy to say that exactly one week ago, our Board approved the first part of the package — the \$228-million Senegal River Basin Multi-purpose Water Resources Development Project. The Project will benefit such countries as Senegal, Mauritania and Mali by improving water availability for agriculture and food production.

It is critically important that our work support the social and economic empowerment of women. We need to harness the energies of all citizens, especially women, to build a secure and prosperous future for the region. During the trip, together with the President of Niger, we issued a collective call to action on women's empowerment and demographics in the Sahel. As part of our new investments, we have committed \$200 million to address those issues. The World Bank Group can provide that new level of support to the Sahel because of the commitment of our donors that support our fund for the poorest — the International Development Association (IDA). We very much appreciate donors' contributions to IDA because that funding translates into programmes that create jobs that empower and that build infrastructure, such as roads and irrigation systems, especially for fragile countries and regions.

The people of the Sahel have struggled for far too long with too little economic growth. They have endured a harsh climate in a period of famine. They have suffered the intricately linked curses of high fertility rates and the world's highest number of maternal and child deaths. There is nothing natural or preordained about this unfortunate state of affairs. For too long, we have failed the Sahel. Our low aspirations reflect our inability to see past what are very real challenges. But let me be clear. The people of the Sahel do not have low aspirations for themselves. They have very high aspirations, and we must respond appropriately.

When I was in Timbuktu, a diverse group of people all had the same message. They want just what all of us

want: a good job, a good education, access to quality health care, and hope for a better life for their children. In Burkina Faso, business leaders told us that they are ready to invest more but that they need better access to affordable energy. Today, people in Burkina Faso pay 74 cents per kilowatt-hour for their electricity, which is almost seven times more than we pay in Washington, D.C. Still, Burkina Faso is expected to grow at 6 per cent this year and next. We can only imagine what Burkina Faso's growth rate would be if it had affordable energy.

All of us must raise our aspirations for the Sahel so they are as high and as ambitious as those of its people. We must demonstrate our solidarity with them through effective, pragmatic support. The lives of the people of the Sahel can be transformed. All they need is our sustained commitment to their vision for a better life. I look forward to working with all Council members to make it happen.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Jim Yong Kim for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Prodi.

Mr. Prodi: This is probably my last formal briefing to the Security Council as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, as I shall complete my mandate on 31 January 2014, although I shall be completely at the Secretary-General's disposal after that. I would therefore like to begin by expressing my profound gratitude for the support extended to me by the Security Council and for the confidence shown in me by the Secretary-General by allowing me to undertake this challenging assignment.

I have been mandated by the Secretary-General to develop a strategy for the region that would synergize the ongoing efforts and at the same time put in place measures that could help the Governments of the region to sustain peace and security in the long run. The report of the Secretary-General on the Sahel (S/2013/354), issued in June, represented the culmination of the strategy-formulation phase of the process and the commencement of the implementation stage. Many factors will continue to impact our efforts in the Sahel and must be taken into account when we are implementing the strategy.

First, the region will have to compete for attention with other, equally serious crises around the world and will struggle to maintain international attention to itself. I say this because that attention is decreasing.

Secondly, the current global economic climate limits traditional funding mechanisms and donors. Thirdly, security and governance are intertwined, and making progress on one will be extremely difficult without making progress on the other. Efforts to fight extremists and separatists cannot succeed without meaningful progress on good governance. Finally, without a reasonably stable security situation, development and humanitarian activities cannot exert their impact. Peace and development are related.

Keeping these factors in mind, I have endeavoured to raise the profile of the challenges facing the Sahel as widely as I could. I have visited many Heads of State throughout the world to raise awareness of the Sahel as a major global problem. In the effort to empower local people at the deepest possible level, my efforts have included visits to the region and interaction with respective Heads of State, consultations with the senior Government officials of key Member States, and participation in several multilateral forums convened to discuss the situation in the Sahel. I have also decided to involve, as much as possible, local experts from Sahel universities, research institutions and Governments in the identification of the sectors and projects that would be key to starting a strong development process.

The strategy for development identified five priorities: agriculture, renewable energy for electrification, infrastructure, education and health. These ideas were then widely shared and discussed it with the relevant stakeholders, including Governments of the region. Thus the strategy was the result of a process empowering Sahelians, and implementation should occur in a similar manner.

The recent visit by the Secretary-General to the region, along with the other principals, was another important step in that regard and will go a long way in bringing attention to the situation in the Sahel region. However, simply maintaining attention to the Sahel would not be sufficient, and considerable resources are needed to help the peoples of the region. But I believe that the most important innovation we can offer is that of starting actions that can respond to the need for urgency and efficacy. Therefore, we must put in place a mechanism that can sustain the utilization of the mobilized resources, multilateral and bilateral, both in money and in kind.

In that regard, the African Development Bank is in the process of formalizing the hosting of an innovative fund called the Sahel Action Fund. Its particularity is

that, as a start, it would use the money share of the Fund as a booster to finalize the design of projects approved by the Governments of the region and implement pilot installations. Turn-key development projects by donors as in-kind donations would quickly follow as part of an overall Sahel strategy. The same Fund will have a secretariat supported, of course, by the United Nations.

Priorities for those efforts would be set by the Sahel Coordination Forum, led by the five core Sahelian Governments, as decided during the first meeting at the top ministerial level, which has already taken place in Mali, during the visit of the Secretary-General to the region. The innovation brought by the new Fund is substantial and addresses the issues of urgency and efficiency of action. The strategy will be facilitated by replicating the pilot projects from the local to the regional level.

To give examples of where we stand in that process, I am pleased to announce that a pilot project to provide solar-powered water purification equipment to hundreds of families in the Sahel will commence shortly. The resources to supply, at the pilot stage, equipment manufactured by a private European company has been pledged by the Italian Government. That is my vision of a private-sector actor acting with the support of Government to help the people of the Sahel, free of cost and any conditions. In any case, that effort will be managed by the African Development Bank as part of the overall Sahel strategy.

A similar effort in the provision of electricity through solar energy in off-grid areas, in cooperation with the Campaign for the Earth Foundation, is in the pipeline as part of the Millennium Development Goal targets set for the region. Scaling up the existing pilot project in Mali is the final objective. On agriculture, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has proposed a detailed capacity-building project related to animal health. We are in the process of mobilizing resources for it. Similarly, work on identifying pilot projects for the infrastructure and education pilot projects is ongoing.

In addition to that, as the Council heard a few minutes ago, strategic efforts are needed from important multilateral institutions to support the development of the Sahel. It will be extremely important that the Sahel Coordination Forum assume the responsibility of enhancing synergies and avoiding duplication and wastage of resources.

I am well aware that the approach I have proposed is new and challenges the current norms of multilateral assistance. However, I believe that it is an innovative way to fill the gap between the ongoing activities on the ground and the long-term development goals set for the region, which will take some time to materialize. I also believe that, given the precarious situation of the peoples of the Sahel, that approach must be given a chance to proceed and should be assessed on the results achieved. At the same time, we must also focus on introducing new and innovative technologies to the Sahel region, as they have the capacity to push and catalyse developmental efforts.

As mentioned earlier, security, governance and development are linked. The situation in Mali was a cause for serious concern for all of us and remains symptomatic for the entire region. The progress made since the French intervention is encouraging and deserves commendation. But it is very clear that when we talk about security, the problems have no border and thus the solutions should have no borders.

As was openly and loudly requested at the ministerial meeting in Bamako on the occasion of the Secretary-General's visit, when security is at stake, the coordination platform should be broadened to surrounding countries. The surrounding countries are Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Senegal, but the case of Libya is especially critical.

Therefore, I would urge the Security Council that all its decisions dealing with terrorism and conflicts in the Sahel take into account the need for governance reforms in the region. Furthermore, Libya, while not part of the Sahel, has a profound impact on the entire region. I would urge that the situations of the Sahel and Libya be dealt with in coordination with each other, so as to achieve the optimal effect.

As requested by the Council, the United Nations system in the region has set up an internal coordination mechanism, chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, Mr. Djinnit, with the participation of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, as well as the regional development teams and the resident coordinators of the Sahel countries.

In the area of governance, we have been focusing on the implementation of activities that involve a

combination of, first, capacity-building measures aimed at improving the delivery of essential services, and second, political inclusion aimed at promoting broad consensus among the population over the country's priorities.

With regard to capacity-building, we have identified two strategic priority areas for intervention: first, support to electoral processes and, second, support to judicial reform and access to justice. We have also initiated a consultation process with civil society to ensure its participation in the implementation of the strategy, especially in activities that aim to promote community security and fight violent extremism, particularly in the border areas.

With regard to the second objective, to strengthen national and regional security mechanisms we have begun to implement activities in the areas of border management and the prevention of violent ideology. Given the vastness of the Sahel region and the length and porosity of many of the borders, we have been focusing on strengthening border management through a combination of capacity-building and confidence-building measures among States. For example, under the Integrated Assistance for Countering Terrorism Initiative, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate have been supporting the development of national counter-terrorism strategies and the establishment of internal coordination and information-sharing mechanisms for integrated border management in Burkina Faso. We are planning to expand that experience in more countries in the Sahel region.

The collaborative management of borders is not only about constraining the activities of criminals and terrorists, but also about giving opportunities for legitimate economic activity. That is why, in implementing the third objective of the strategy, we have been focusing on fostering better integration between humanitarian and development interventions, and supporting the design of innovative projects and tools for resilience, including by developing shared infrastructure. We have mapped ongoing resilience-friendly intervention in the countries of the Sahel as validated by the United Nations country teams across the regions, and have planned regional strategic intervention on resilience by the United Nations system across the Sahel.

A regional food reserve has already been developed under the auspice of the Economic Community of West African States, and the World Food Programme will provide technical advice. In addition, the World Bank has contributed \$100 million to support a number of activities in the Sahel region identified under the resilience pillar of the United Nations strategy, in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund. Gaps in the current resilience operation have been identified in the areas of urban livelihoods, micro-insurance, community empowerment and pastoral populations.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate two messages. First, we must not forget the Sahel, even with so many other problems on the Council's agenda. Secondly, I appeal to the international community to be very generous to the people of the Sahel in terms of both financial and in-kind assistance, as they remain in dire and urgent need.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Prodi for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. António.

Mr. António (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to apologize for the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, who would have wished to participate in this meeting, as she did in the joint visit mentioned by previous speakers. For reasons beyond her control, she was not able to do so. Allow me therefore, on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, to thank France for having placed the situation of the Sahel on its programme of work for the month and for having invited us to this meeting. That reflects the Council's ongoing interest in the challenges posed by the Sahel region.

In that regard, I welcome the close cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations concerning the situation in Mali and in the Sahel as a whole. We recall that our two organizations led a joint assessment mission in the Sahelo-Saharan region in December 2011, in implementation of the relevant provisions of the strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations. More recently, as mentioned by previous speakers, we also conducted the joint visit to the Sahel. I take this opportunity to express the full appreciation of the African Union to the Secretary-General, the President of the World Bank, the European Union and the African Development Bank

for that joint initiative, which has set an example for the other situations we will face, as it has indeed already done in the Congo.

With respect to Mali, I welcome the important strides that have been made in stabilizing the situation there with the deployment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which facilitated the peaceful and successful holding of presidential elections and the first round of legislative elections on 24 November, with a second round scheduled for 15 December.

The African Union reiterates its appeal to the Malian stakeholders, with the support of the appropriate regional and international actors, to redouble their efforts to overcome the obstacles to the effective implementation of the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement of 18 June and the promotion of an inclusive national reconciliation process that respects the territorial integrity of Mali. The African Union attaches great importance to the immediate restoration of the authority of the Malian State over its full territory. From that perspective, the issue of Kidal must be resolved without delay, because there must not be any lawless zone on Malian territory. The African Union, through me, reaffirms its support for the Malian authorities in their endeavour to promote reconciliation among the different groups that constitute the Malian people.

With respect to the overall situation in the region of the Sahel, I reaffirm the importance that the African Union attaches to an integrated approach to the international community's activities in the Sahel. In that regard, we welcome the Council's adoption of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, which encompasses a holistic view of the challenges, the security issues, the humanitarian aspects and the development of the region. Likewise, we reaffirm the crucial importance of stronger security cooperation among the countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region, with the support of international partners, and we stress the importance of regional, interregional and international coordination in the fight against the threats that persist in the region.

For its part, given the challenges and threats in the Sahel region, the African Union is continuing its efforts to strengthen security cooperation among the countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region through the Nouakchott Process. Launched in March by the Commission, the Process is based on the holding of regular meetings of

the heads of intelligence and security services, as well as of relevant ministers, to exchange information and agree on shared or coordinated forms of action.

The Nouakchott Process has proven to be a crucial tool in efforts of the countries of the region to collectively take up the transnational security challenges they face. In the final analysis, for the countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region, it is a matter of building a collective security system within the framework of the African peace and security architecture. In the coming weeks, we expect to consider a number of separate initiatives designed to further strengthen the Nouakchott Process.

We cannot overemphasize the crucial importance of long-term socioeconomic development to efforts to create lasting stability in the Sahelo-Saharan region. As we said at the outset, the African Union welcomes the joint visit to the region, from 4 to 9 November, by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the President of the World Bank, the President of the African Development Bank, and the Commissioner for Development of the European Union. For the African Union, that visit reflected the commitment of the international community to addressing the multidimensional challenges facing the Sahel within the framework of close collaboration among all the relevant stakeholders. It also highlighted the need for close coordination among all the different initiatives for the Sahel.

In that context, the African Union reaffirms its readiness to work for the establishment of a joint secretariat, as provided for in the communiqué issued by the ministerial meeting held Bamako on 4 November on the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. I take this opportunity to thank the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa for his proposals to that end.

With respect to strengthening its presence in the region, the African Union has established the Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), under the leadership of the High Representative, in order to actively contribute to the process underway in Mali, as well as to international efforts to support the Sahel region. On 19 and 20 October, MISAHEL held a workshop with all of the specialized institutions and liaison officers of the African Union in the region so as to draw up its plan of action. The African Union Commission will soon organize a high-level meeting of the African Union specialized institutions with a

view to establishing a holistic approach so as to better coordinate action already under way in the Sahel from a political, security, economic and sociocultural point of view.

We welcome the partners, whose valuable assistance will make it possible to take up the challenges on the continent. We launch an appeal to them to strengthen their support to countries in the region and to provide support for common initiatives to be carried out as part of their collective efforts. The constraints of history and the geography of the Sahel, as well as present-day political facts, oblige us to adopt a coordinated approach, a united approach, in the face of the challenges before us.

To conclude, allow me to reaffirm the determination and availability of the African Union, in close cooperation with countries in the region and with international partners, first and foremost the United Nations, to play its proper role in supporting individual and collective efforts to promote peace, stability and security initiated by the States in the Sahel-Saharan region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. António for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Reveyrand de Menthon.

Mr. Reveyrand de Menthon (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the European Union (EU), I would like to thank the French Presidency of the Security Council for convening this important debate today. I would also like to very warmly thank the Secretary-General for closely associating the European Union in all international efforts regarding the Sahelian region. That includes his visit some weeks ago, as well as his constant follow-up to the very important activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

The Sahel countries face a number of serious and interlinked challenges. The crisis in Mali and the security vacuum after the Libyan revolution have underscored the political, economic and humanitarian vulnerabilities that have been long-standing in the region. The joint high-level visit of the Secretary-General with the President of the World Bank, the President of the African Union Commission, the President of the African Development Bank and the European Commission for Development demonstrated the international community's intention to continue

to scale up those efforts so as to help the countries in the region tackle a crisis that is affecting them all, especially the lack of security and terrorism, and tackle their root causes.

We all welcomed the highly relevant United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, whose priorities are governance, humanitarian and human rights activities and bolstering security, with a clear definition of the roles of each at the national and regional levels. Those priorities are shared by everyone. The mission also stressed everyone's intention to work using a comprehensive approach based on the interactions between security and development. It is now broadly acknowledged that there can be no lasting security without inclusive development, and that security is a sine qua non for sustainable development. The European Union based its Sahel strategy, adopted almost three years ago, on that idea and has mobilized its various tools along that same line in order best to meet the requirements of that cohesive strategy.

What I also took away from the Secretary-General's visit is the constant desire for the heads of State of the region to work for peace and take more fully into account the needs of the people, including the youth of the Sahel. In that regard, I think that we should try more often to deepen our knowledge of the local situations by better including African researchers and intellectuals. Unfortunately, those players are often insufficiently recognized, whereas they are essential to completing a process of genuine ownership.

The European Union enjoys close cooperation with all its partners and stands ready to enhance its efforts diplomatically in the framework of reconciliation and inclusive dialogue. We also stand ready to enhance our efforts in the operational, developmental and humanitarian spheres through the preparation of peace dividends.

The crisis that Mali experienced from 2012 and 2013, and which that country is struggling to overcome little by little with determination, is yet another illustration of the security and development crisis that is afflicting the Sahel-Saharan region at a time when the terrorist risk remains ever present. The European Union has provided its utmost support to Mali. During his visit to the European Parliament in Brussels last Monday and Tuesday, the new President of Mali reiterated his intention to quickly tackle the immense security challenges, so as to bring lasting stability to

his country, reconcile the Malian people and build a new political governance model by drawing on all of the lessons from the past.

The efforts of the international community must not fail. The multifaceted MINUSMA has an essential role to play in supporting the Malian authorities so that they can fully reinstate sovereignty and the rule of law across the country and manage to restore dialogue and reconciliation, which have been so long awaited, in particular in the framework of the peace process opened with the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement of 18 June. A strong commitment in the north of the country is important, because the future of the Sahel region as a whole today is largely being played out in the north of the country.

The EU, in close relationship with all its partners, stands ready to scale up its efforts diplomatically, in the framework of reconciliation and inclusive dialogue, to which it is committed. We also stand ready on the operational and development front, as well as with regard to humanitarian activities, so as to prepare the dividends of peace. The high-level Donor Conference for Development in Mali, organized in Brussels on 15 May, was very important. The EU is fully playing its role and fully upholding all its promises with the 512 million Euros it has pledged and the €238 million that will be disbursed in 2013.

Efforts to reinstate peace and security in Mali will be in vain if the threat shifts and if other countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region in the wider sense fall victim to the same crisis, the full effects of which we saw both in Mali and in Libya.

Today, the European Union is determined to deepen its implementation of the EU External Action Service Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel: in order to better interlink security and development, including by using a preventative approach for the most fragile environments. The EU also intends to expand the implementation of its strategy to all the countries that are most exposed to the risks of destabilization, and to better involve all concerned countries without whose participation no permanent stability is possible, particularly countries from north Africa directly concerned, and of course, those that are also long-standing EU partners.

Moreover, when we look towards the Sahel from Europe, we find a huge space, so that geography creates an inevitable permanent solidarity. We look at that

space and see it initially as an area of risk, but it is also actually a space for cooperation of multiple types, including cultural and environmental cooperation. It is also a space for economic development, again the only solution for creating business and jobs, which will reduce the current tensions. That could be achieved with the assistance of all social actors, enterprises and civil society.

All of that requires a scaled-up commitment. During the joint visit, Commissioner Piebalgs announced that the European Union would provide €5 billion for its action in the Sahel region for the next seven years. In a rapidly changing environment, our collective efforts must respond to requirements of flexibility and effectiveness. To do that, the close and constant coordination of our efforts is essential, both globally and on the ground. There must also be greater ownership of the policies undertaken.

Bolstering cooperation and interregional cooperation between Sahel countries, the countries of West Africa and the countries of the Maghreb is crucial in order to develop inclusive and effective strategies to combat terrorist activities and transborder organized crime in a comprehensive and global manner. Many States of the region have committed to developing bilateral or trilateral coordination mechanisms, or to working in subregional and continental frameworks, as regards both development and security. The European Union fully supports those initiatives. It stands ready to back them, in particular efforts to strengthen the administration of the Saharan areas, in particular border areas, and to work more strongly to increase resilience.

More broadly, the European Union wishes to attain the closest cooperation possible with all partners who have developed strategic approaches for the Sahel, in the greatest respect for the sovereignty and leadership of Sahel-Saharan States and subregional organizations. The Bamako Declaration adopted on 5 November, in the framework of the high-level joint visit, paves the way for stronger international cooperation, bringing together all countries and stakeholders concerned. The European Union will help with setting it up, which should take place as soon as possible.

Developments in the Sahel this year have given us an idea of the scope of the regional crisis. We must act together in a sustainable manner to combat terrorism and crime. We must tackle the root causes of the situation: poverty, inequalities, inadequate institutions

and crime, with, as we well know, a strong constraint arising in the demographic context. The determination of the peoples of the Sahel, linked with the mobilization of the international community, also demonstrates that the worst is not inescapable and that the crisis can be overcome if we are patient and resolute. That is indeed the spirit that animates the international community today. It is grounds for great hope for tomorrow.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. In accordance with the understanding reached among members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement. The statement will be issued as a document to the Security Council, S/PRST/2013/20.

I now give the floor to members of the Security Council.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is pleased to take part in this debate under the French presidency on the situation in the Sahel, a situation which is at the heart of the agenda of the Security Council. We welcome the participation of Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the President of the World Bank, Mr Jim Yong Kim, and Mr. Romano Prodi, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, as well as representatives of the African Union and the European Union.

It was almost exactly a year ago that, in December 2012, my country devoted the main debate of the Moroccan presidency to this same issue, the Sahel (see S/PV.6882). Since then a United Nations integrated strategy has been drawn up and its implementation begun. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for the efforts that they have made in developing this integrated strategy and their plea for its diligent and coordinated implementation.

Given our immediate proximity to the States of the Sahel, some years before the events in northern Mali my country had a premonition of the dangers threatening the Sahel region and tried to draw the attention of the international community to it and to generate some action. Our concern stemmed from an awareness of the connections we saw between terrorism and trafficking in drugs, weapons and people, as well as the kidnapping of innocent tourists, humanitarian workers and even United Nations officials. Therefore, my country called

for concerted action by States of the Sahel and the Magreb in order to take preventive action and to stem the harmful effects of those activities, which were already noticeable.

The tragic events in northern Mali and the serious attack on its territorial integrity have shown that the threat to stability was not a distant hypothesis but an immediate reality, with incalculable consequences for the entire region and beyond. In calling on the international community to act quickly and resolutely in Mali, Morocco has always sought to place the settlement of the crisis in that country in its natural regional environment. Today, we are reassured to see Mali recovering, with the help of France, Africa and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and bilateral partners, taking significant steps on the path towards stabilization and national reconciliation.

Beyond Mali, we were very pleased to see the United Nations begin a preventive approach in drawing up the integrated strategy for the entire region. Implementing that strategy requires each of the States in the region to take ownership of it, as well as the necessary and consistent support of the international community. The visit by the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank, with the participation of regional and international organizations, as well as international and regional donors, reveals the willingness to fully apply the different dimensions of the strategy.

Through the ministerial meeting of Bamako on 5 November, the States of the Sahel and the Magreb showed their determination to change the facts on the ground by identifying common priorities in security, governance, resilience and sustainable development, around which the United Nations integral strategy should be articulated. The meeting urged countries of the region, international, regional and subregional organizations — including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States and the Arab Maghreb Union — as well as the financial institutions of bilateral partners to contribute to the success of the strategy for the Sahel. In Bamako they came to important conclusions of an institutional nature to implement the strategy, in particular with the setting up of a platform to be chaired by Mali for the next two years.

After that meeting, my country organized on 14 November 2013, in Rabat, a ministerial conference designed to strengthen cooperation in matters of border

security among the countries of the Magreb and the Sahel. That meeting led to the adoption of the Rabat Declaration, which advocated for specific measures to improve security along the common borders in the region. That cooperation is a necessary step for any strategy to fight terrorism and extremism, the major challenges in the entire region.

The pioneering action in the Sahel inaugurated by the United Nations and its partners, including the World Bank and regional and subregional organizations, will be judged according to its impact and its repercussions for the entire people of the Sahel region. That impact of course depends on the commitment by the international community to fight terrorism and separatism and to relieve the humanitarian crisis that is affecting that region. Moreover, in acknowledging that reality, Morocco took the initiative on 20 September to devote the main debate of its chairmanship of the Counter-Terrorism Committee to the challenge of terrorism in the Sahel region.

We agree with Mr. Prodi when he states that

“[t]he collaborative management of borders is not only about constraining the activities of criminals and terrorists, but also about giving opportunities for legitimate economic activity”.

History has amply demonstrated that the creation of common economic projects and the complementary infrastructure along the common borders has made it possible not only to overcome conflicts and disputes but also to set up good-neighbourly, stable and fruitful relations and to promote development projects that create jobs and offer prospects to young people.

The serious humanitarian situation that affects hundreds of thousands of human beings in the Sahel forces them to risk their lives and those of their children in order to escape the advance of the desert and its cortege of famine and epidemics. The 150 million inhabitants of the Sahel have reached the limits of their capacity to resist the harmful effects of climate change and the decline in agricultural and pastoral products. They cannot resist the temptation to emigrate if they are not given any tangible opportunity to improve their socioeconomic conditions in place. That improvement cannot happen without international assistance in proportion to the pressing needs of that vulnerable population.

In that context, we welcome the setting up of an action fund for the Sahel to finance the projects agreed

to by Governments of the region, the launch of pilot projects to provide drinking water to hundreds of families and electricity from solar power, the construction of shared infrastructure and the establishment of a regional food reserve under ECOWAS and the World Food Programme. While limited, those actions reflect the many dimensions of the United Nations integrated strategy. We hope to find in the Secretary-General's next report, to be issued in June 2014, an indication of more substantial progress in its implementation. We are, of course, just beginning, but the strategy's success will be measured by the relevance, scope and impact of the initial actions.

For its part, Morocco is linked to the Sahel through age-old multifaceted relations and is determined to contribute, with the Council, to the success of the integrated strategy for the Sahel. That commitment was confirmed by His Majesty the King on 19 September on his trip to Mali for the inauguration of the Malian President, and renewed recently in the royal message addressed to the Elysée Summit for Peace and Security in Africa. It is a commitment that brings together human development, the preservation of cultural and religious identity, and safeguarding the territorial integrity of the States of the Sahel through inclusive, open and sustained cooperation on security.

The presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/20) that we have just adopted reflects our common commitment to the people of the Sahel region. My delegation would like to express its gratitude for the spirit of cooperation shown by all Council members, which has facilitated the preparation and adoption of the statement.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): We thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Special Envoy Romano Prodi, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim and the representatives of the African Union and the European Union for their statements this morning. We welcome the continued international focus on the Sahel region and appreciate the Secretary-General's personal commitment and leadership in convening the high-level meeting on the situation in the Sahel on the sidelines of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly in September.

The Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank, during their joint visit in November, drew attention to the economic and security plight of that vulnerable region and heard from the Sahelian leaders about how the international community can assist them in turning around the dire economic situation there. The

participation of the leaders and representatives of the African Union, the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the African Development Bank made this a truly international effort. This is synergy in action. It has raised international consciousness about the problems in the Sahel region and helped mobilize political and economic support to address them. We also appreciate the determined efforts made by the Special Envoy this year.

The Sahel region continues to face diverse challenges, including weak governance, youth unemployment, a worsening humanitarian situation, food insecurity and the adverse impact of climate change. The speed and gravity with which the crisis in Mali unfolded last year was a stark reminder of the vulnerabilities and marginalization of the entire region. The institutional weaknesses, capacity deficits and lack of resources faced by the countries of the region further accentuate those problems.

Pakistan has supported the efforts of the Council to take effective measures to counter the grave threats posed by the rise of terrorism, transnational organized crime, and illicit drugs and weapons trafficking in West Africa and the Sahel. Tackling those threats requires greater regional cooperation in border management, as well as in the justice and law enforcement sectors. Moreover, the international community must continue to work with the relevant countries and regional organizations to strengthen State institutions. In that regard, the principles of national ownership and close consultation with concerned countries must be respected.

The wider regional ramifications of the Libyan and Malian conflicts required a strategy that went beyond the conventional security, political and peacekeeping responses. The region needed a new paradigm. The Security Council and the Secretary-General, working together, have crafted and launched the new paradigm, which encompasses security, governance, humanitarian, human rights and development aspects, and applies to all phases of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding in the countries affected by conflict. A similar approach has been adopted for the Great Lakes region in the form of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, which is already paying dividends on the ground.

The social instability and economic volatility in the Sahel region are a direct consequence of poverty,

marginalization and deprivation. No security or political strategy would succeed without strong national and international interventions for economic development. We therefore welcome the newfound partnership between the World Bank and the United Nations in the Sahel region, and hope that it will continue to become stronger in the years to come.

The real challenge lies in implementing the strategy to produce tangible results. That is not an easy task. It requires strong and persistent support and commitment on the part of the national, regional and international actors. The international community must continue to mobilize resources for the successful implementation of the Sahel strategy. At the same time, the regional States will have to demonstrate political will to fulfil their commitments and take advantage of the opportunity to translate that strategy into tangible dividends for their people.

For its part, Pakistan will continue to provide full political support to the United Nations strategy and play its role both within and outside the Security Council for long-term peace and stability in the Sahel region.

Finally, we thank Morocco for its effective coordination in producing the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/20), which we fully support and endorse.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank the President, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, World Bank President Kim, Special Envoy Prodi, Ambassador António and Special Representative Reveyrand De Menthon for their briefings and for calling the Council's attention to the challenges and opportunities we face in the Sahel.

My Government welcomes the United Nations and the World Bank's joint commitment to acting as partners in the region, as they are also doing in the Great Lakes. We hope that the partnership will succeed in mobilizing both internal and international efforts to achieve political and economic progress.

As the briefings make clear, countries in the Sahel continue to be plagued by cross-cutting challenges that fuel cycles of violence and impede economic progress. Porous borders and ungoverned and undergoverned spaces across the vast region facilitate the flow of illicit arms and narcotics, while also providing terrorist groups with safe havens within which they can train and plan future attacks. Civil strife and other social disruptions contribute to widespread food insecurity.

The result is chronic suffering, giving way at regular intervals to large-scale humanitarian crises.

The visit of the Secretary-General last month to the region — joined by Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Ms. Dlamini-Zuma, European Union Commissioner Piebalgs and African Development Bank President Kaberuka — underscored the area's importance and the need to build on prior initiatives that respond to its many overlapping problems. Accordingly, we commend the European Union and World Bank pledge of \$8 billion in new assistance over the next five years to advance the strategic goals laid out in the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. We urge partners and Governments to lend additional backing to that and associated measures.

I would also like to recognize the efforts of Special Envoy Prodi to emphasize how critical it is that regional Governments take the lead in identifying and designing solutions to the diverse and interrelated dilemmas that they confront. We encourage the entire United Nations system to embrace those efforts and to push ahead vigorously in implementing the integrated strategy. To that end, the United States has been and will remain an active partner in trying to advance the three goals of the strategy: to strengthen governance, to improve regional security capabilities and to develop long-term plans for resilience.

In many respects, better governance is the starting point for progress in every other arena, including economic development, public safety and the peaceful resolution of debilitating conflicts. Recognizing that, the United States is currently examining ways to step up its efforts across the Sahel-Maghreb region to bolster democratic institutions. We believe that in the Sahel, as elsewhere, an open and inclusive political system can provide a foundation for problem-solving, while simultaneously reducing the appeal of violent extremist groups.

Building security capacity, especially in States where the political institutions are fragile is difficult, but essential. Working through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, the United States is helping to enhance the ability of 10 countries in the Sahel and the Maghreb to combat terrorism, strengthen regional security cooperation, discredit radical ideologies and assist communities that are most at risk. The Partnership is an ongoing effort that is informed by local experience and supported by many leaders in the

region. It recognizes the value of development aid in responding to the political grievances and day-to-day needs of people who might otherwise be tempted, in their desperation, to join or support extremist groups.

Strategies to improve security and extend the rule of law are more likely to achieve their goals where citizens have reason to hope and are integrated into communities that are becoming stronger and more cohesive. In a parallel effort, the United States is also working closely with Germany, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, and other allies and partners to prevent illegal trafficking in ammunition and arms.

Through the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative in the Sahel, my Government is engaged with States in the region, the World Bank, the United Nations and other stakeholders in a vital initiative to reduce what has become a chronic need for emergency assistance. By coordinating our efforts to build resilience, we are enhancing the capacities of individuals, families, communities and entire countries to prevent, adapt to and recover from civil strife, natural disasters and similarly disruptive events. To the extent that those initiatives succeed, people in the region will be less vulnerable to stress of all kinds and better equipped to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth.

The United States commends the United Nations for making resilience a core pillar of its regional strategy, and the World Bank for its recent investment pledges aimed at improving infrastructure and supporting economic development in rural areas, where the most vulnerable populations live.

Although the challenges facing the Sahel remain daunting, we are seeing progress. Many African countries are deeply engaged in combating terrorism, brokering peace and fostering their critical economic and social gains. Looking ahead, we must continue to respect the leadership, ownership and entrepreneurship of our African partners. We are hopeful for the future because we know that the goals of improved governance, greater security and more resilience that we seek respond to a yearning that exists among people throughout the Sahel region, for a chance to live in larger freedom, with greater prosperity, greater security and more peace.

With those goals in mind, let us move ahead to implement our integrated strategy in full cooperation with one another.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I wish to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, Mr. Romano Prodi; the President of the World Bank, Mr. Jim Yong Kim; and other representatives for their participation in and presentations at today's meeting.

The Sahel region continues to face security, political, humanitarian and human rights challenges. Those include terrorism, transnational crimes such as drug trafficking, and political instability arising from weak governance. The humanitarian situation remains dire with hundreds of thousands of displaced people and millions facing the threat of hunger.

Against that backdrop, my country fully supports the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. A comprehensive and coordinated approach is indeed critical in tackling that multifaceted crisis. In that context, the high-level meeting on the situation in the Sahel, held in September, provided a valuable opportunity to raise awareness of the challenges and to reaffirm the importance of the United Nations integrated strategy to the region.

The Republic of Korea also highly commends the joint initiative of the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank to visit the region together last month in spearheading the implementation of the strategy. The visit included the participation of the African Union, the European Union and the African Development Bank, and clearly demonstrated the importance of an integrated approach to effectively addressing the underlying causes of the Sahel crisis. We believe that the pledges of over \$8 billion will be instrumental in helping the Sahel region to realize its potential.

Allow me to highlight a few areas that my delegation considers to be essential to the effective implementation of the integrated strategy. First, the political will of the Governments concerned and their national and regional ownership are crucial. The regional nature of the integrated strategy calls for strengthened efforts towards building trust and confidence among all Governments of the region. In that regard, we welcome the holding in Bamako of the ministerial meeting on the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, and of the regional conference on border security between the Sahel and Maghreb regions, held in Rabat last month.

Secondly, another element required for success is ensuring overall coherence and complementarity to

maximize the effectiveness of assistance and avoid duplication. That applies not only to coordination among international and regional organizations, but also to donors, regional Governments and United Nations agencies as a whole.

Thirdly, to ensure tangible progress, it is important to set clear short-term and long-term priorities and to establish well-defined benchmarks. The priorities and benchmarks need to be developed in close coordination with the Governments of the region.

Finally, we appreciate the role of Morocco in working out the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/20), which we support.

It is essential that the international community maintain its engagement and commitment to the Sahel. The Republic of Korea continues to support the efforts to promote peace and development in the region.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Australia welcomes today's briefing on the Sahel and the personal commitment of the Secretary-General, Special Envoy Prodi and the other speakers, including World Bank President Kim and the representatives of the African Union and the European Union. I must say, as a general comment in starting, that the partnership between the United Nations and the World Bank, in particular, has the potential to be a genuinely transformative one, and I know that the global community wants to see it grow.

We know that the Sahel region has been struggling for far too long with chronic humanitarian, security and governance crises. Possibly nowhere is the development-security nexus as pronounced. The region illustrates the deep connection between security challenges, such as terrorism and transnational crime, and development challenges, such as food security and the generation of economic opportunities. As Mr. Prodi has reminded us, those challenges transcend borders and so, obviously, must the solutions. He has previously warned us, and did so again today, that we must not forget the Sahel or we risk more crises like the one in Mali.

We welcome the visit led by the Secretary-General and World Bank President. It highlighted the centrality of addressing economic challenges as part of the path to peace, building on their partnership in the Great Lakes region. The \$8 billion mobilized will reinforce the dividends of peace.

Progress towards peace and stability requires genuine United Nations, intergovernmental and regional

cooperation and coordinated engagement. Australia considers that the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel region provides a solid framework, and we strongly support its three strategic objectives. It is obvious that the key element now is to move ahead with implementation by identifying priorities for action and the comparative advantage and added value of the United Nations itself.

Within that context, I would like to address three specific issues: first, national ownership and regional cooperation; secondly, terrorism and transnational crime; and thirdly, resilience. First, Governments of the region must own and lead efforts in the Sahel; they must in turn be accountable to their populations. We therefore welcome the 5 November ministerial meeting held in Bamako. The launch of the coordination platform at the meeting was an important milestone, and we look forward to hearing more about its work and how the Council can support it.

Increasing cooperation between national Governments and regional and international organizations will be vital to the success of the strategy. That is particularly true of efforts to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime, my second area of focus. The threat must be tackled through capacity-building, prevention and coordination. Border management and building law-based criminal justice should be important focuses of our capacity-building efforts. In that regard, we welcome the recent progress made on transborder security at the November regional ministerial conference in Morocco.

We know that a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy must include efforts to prevent terrorism and extremism from emerging, arming and recruiting. We therefore particularly welcomes the strategy's recommendations on countering violent extremism, including through regional dialogue among traditional, community and faith-based leaders and organizations. I should note that the Al-Qaida sanctions regime has significant potential to help Sahel States to turn the tide against Al-Qaida affiliates in the region, but it can realize that only if the regime is genuinely accessible to States and is integrated into their responses. We have to place the sanctions regime in the hands of the affected countries and regions, both to ensure that the sanctions list accurately reflects the dynamic and evolving nature of the threat and to enhance its implementation.

As Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning

Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, Australia is committed to seeing the Committee working collaboratively with the region to identify the individuals and entities we should be applying the sanctions against — the Al Qaida affiliates, their leaders and, most importantly, their enablers, those who provide the arms, funds and recruits. To that end, on 3 December we convened a special meeting with Member States of the Sahel and Maghreb to discuss the threat posed by Al-Qaida, the first in a series of steps in improving regional awareness and engagement.

Finally, as others have said, building resilience in the Sahel will be essential to breaking the cycle of humanitarian crises and protecting the most vulnerable from persistent shocks. We must also target the underlying drivers of conflict — inequality, social exclusion and ethnic tensions. To date, my own country has provided \$50 million in assistance to the region over the past two years to meet immediate needs, and has also supported communities in the region in building long-term resilience to disasters and addressing the causes of food insecurity, including support for agricultural research.

To conclude, we have seen the impact of concerted national, regional and international efforts in Mali. We are confident that the Sahel strategy can be a valuable tool for the United Nations, the region and international partners in achieving a coordinated response to the challenges of the broader Sahel region. Much of the effort will have to be innovative. We know that it is overdue, and it is, of course, necessary.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, President Jim Yong Kim, Special Envoy Romano Prodi and the observers of the African Union and European Union for their briefings and information.

There is no doubt that the most significant event of recent months concerning the Sahel region was the joint visit to several countries by the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank, along with representatives of other key partners, such as the African Development Bank, the African Union and the European Union. Its significance derives from the high priority the international community has accorded to dealing with the many challenges afflicting the region, and to doing that in a coordinated, integrated way, taking advantage of the synergies offered by joint action. In this way, we can move forward while simultaneously addressing issues of stability and

democratic governance as well as of development and the humanitarian attention that the people of this troubled part of the continent require.

We commend the central theme of the Secretary-General's message, which is that peace and development must go hand in hand, and that its implementation requires a broad coalition of international actors in support of the countries in the region. We are also encouraged by the good will and commitment shown by the national authorities and members of civil society who participated in the various meetings held during the visit. The Secretary-General and President Jim Yong Kim spoke today about their reactions to those interesting interactions. We hope that all the stakeholders will follow through on the roles that they must play in dealing with the various complex challenges the region is facing.

Since this is the second joint visit to Africa by the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank this year, we encourage each of them to continue their work in their respective areas to ensure that both institutions give reciprocal support to the region to the benefit of its member countries. We acknowledge how vital it is for the Sahel region to break the vicious cycle of challenges that afflict it, including fragile institutions, precarious governance systems, unacceptable socioeconomic indicators, political instability and civic insecurity, along with the consequences of climate disasters and their impact on food security. Almost all of these are cross-border phenomena, and thus one country's problems tend to spread to others very quickly; at the same time, individual countries' achievements also have the potential to spill over to the benefit of the rest. That is why we support the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

Like others, we stress the importance of national and regional ownership of the strategy, whose implementation is primarily up to the member States of the Sahel, West Africa and the Maghreb. Of course, the regional approach should be adapted to each country's specifics, so that the final outcome will be something more than the sum of individual situations. We welcome the decision of the leaders of the region to establish a follow-up mechanism, the so-called coordination platform, in order to monitor implementation of the commitments to be undertaken.

Lastly, we would like to thank our colleagues in the Moroccan delegation for promoting today's

presidential statement, whose content we fully support (S/PRST/2013/20).

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China is grateful for the President's efforts in convening today's meeting, and for the briefings and presence of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Special Envoy Prodi and Mr. Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank. We also listened with great interest to the statements made by the representatives of the African Union and the European Union.

At present, the situation generally in Africa is characterized by stability, development and peace. In most countries, the political situation remains stable, and tensions have been mitigated in certain flashpoint areas. The African Union and other regional organizations and African countries are committed to maintaining peace and stability, promoting the African collective security mechanism and seeking African solutions to African problems.

The African economy has maintained rapid growth. The integration process is pressing ahead. The international influence of the African continent has been rising steadily. The international community is paying more attention to Africa. The launch of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and the presidential statement adopted moments ago (S/PRST/2013/20) fully demonstrate the priority that has been given by the international community to peace and security in Africa, including the Sahel region.

The security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel has witnessed some improvement recently. However, the region remains fragile, for which China expresses its concern. We appreciate the recent joint visit to the Sahel region by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Ms. Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, President Jim Yong Kim of the World Bank, and President Kaberuka of the African Development Bank. We welcome and applaud the positive results of the joint visit. We also appreciate the hard work of Special Envoy Prodi in implementing the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. We welcome the establishment of the coordination platform for the strategy and of the secretariat for technical coordination. We hope that that relevant mechanism will play a positive role in improving the situation in the Sahel.

The problems in the Sahel are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Swift and comprehensive

improvement of the situation in the region requires integrated policies. China suggests that the international community work concertedly in the following three areas.

First of all, the international community must continue to support the efforts of the countries of the region in maintaining peace and stability. Significant progress has been achieved in the situation in Mali, as demonstrated by the successful legislative election, and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali is making steady headway in deployment. However, we should be mindful that the Sahel is still facing various threats, including the spread of terrorism and extremism, weapons proliferation and transnational organized crime. Mali and other countries of the region are still facing a long and winding road in their quest for long-term stability. The international community should therefore give greater attention to the situation in the region and actively assist countries of the region to consolidate peace and maintain stability.

Secondly, the international community must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries of the region and listen carefully to their specific proposals and ideas concerning development and counter-terrorism. In the process of implementing specific projects, the international community must fully respect the opinions of the host countries so that the assistance can be more effective. The efforts to counter and combat terrorism and organized crime in the region involve many countries and are transboundary in nature. Countries of the region must strengthen dialogue, reinforce mutual trust and actively cooperate with one another to address those challenges. The international community and, in particular, the United Nations, can play a constructive role in that regard.

Thirdly, the root cause of the problems in the Sahel is poverty and underdevelopment. The international community must give priority to helping countries of the region achieve development by increasing assistance and investment in the Sahel so as to help those countries build capacity and infrastructure, expand their capacity for independent development, and ensure food security and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. China welcomes the pledges of the World Bank and the African Development Bank to provide \$1.5 billion and \$4 billion, respectively, to the Sahel region. We hope that the relevant pledges will be paid in

full as soon as possible so as to enable an early launch of relevant projects and benefit the local population.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to China-Africa relations. China has provided long-standing support to African countries in exploring viable development paths based on their national realities as well as assistance to the best of its ability to those countries as they pursue unity, strength, independent development and finding their own solutions to regional issues, including the situation in the Sahel.

Last week, the first Chinese contingent, consisting of 135 peacekeepers, arrived in Mali and reported for duty. In the future, China stands ready to further exchange and enhance its cooperation with international and regional organizations, including the United Nations, so as to make a greater contribution to achieving an early and comprehensive settlement of problems that the Sahel is facing and to promoting the peace, development and stability of Africa.

In closing, I would like to thank the Permanent Mission of Morocco for its efforts in drafting the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/20). China fully supports the text of the statement.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the French delegation for convening today's meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, the President of the World Bank, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations and the European Union Special Representative for the Sahel. I thank each of them for their briefings.

On the many occasions in which we have dealt with particularly conflicts in the region, such as in Mali, Argentina has reiterated the importance of maintaining our full focus on the regional issues in the Sahel, and underscored the need and the urgency of having a United Nations integrated strategy that would encompass security, governance, development, human rights, humanitarian issues and economic growth. Our insistence arises from and is nourished by a very concrete reality and need. Our is not just a strategic vision; it is also a question of effectiveness and transparency, and resulted in a whole series of overlapping, cross-cutting national, regional and international programmes that, despite their good intentions, have not had the expected results.

I say that because the Sahel still presents one of the lowest human development indices in the world. There are 11.4 million people suffering from food insecurity and about 5 million children under the age of five threatened with acute malnutrition. Despite all of the efforts in terms of assistance, the Sahel is still experiencing very serious and recurrent outbreaks of infectious diseases, chronic investment shortages in the energy and agricultural sectors, and ineffective social protection systems, with unequal access to basic social services, a worsening of the environment and a great deal of discrimination.

Obviously, as revealed by the conflicts in the Sudan, Libya and Mali, the various programmes have not been able to address the root causes of the conflicts or the numerous illegal networks of and threats posed by the different extremist and terrorist groups that operate in the region. For that reason, in raising awareness of, sharing and supporting the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, we have demonstrated our belief in its proper implementation and our trust that it can resolve the root causes of the conflict. That would be the best response that we could make for peace and security in the Sahel.

Since our meeting in June, when we were presented with the integrated strategy (S/PV.6988), a great deal of progress has been made, thanks to the impetus given to it by the Secretary-General and Mr. Prodi. We welcome the meetings that took place at Headquarters, the special meeting on enhancing cooperation and technical assistance in the global fight against terrorism, and the high-level meeting in September, as well as the meetings that took place recently in Bamako and Rabat. Obviously, we also highlight the importance of the joint visit made by the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank. Furthermore, we would like to thank the delegation of Morocco for having placed and kept this topic among the priorities on our agenda and for drafting important documents such as that we have just adopted (S/PRST/2013/20).

During his mandate as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Prodi has not only highlighted the complex reality of the Sahel region; he has also educated the international community and the Security Council by conveying his understanding of a complex situation and by listening to the voices of the different communities, understanding their cultures and respecting their priorities. However, we must acknowledge that it is crucial that this

awareness — which has forced the international community to look comprehensively at the situation in the Sahel region — not prevent us from considering whatever may be required.

Very briefly, I would like to recall that the main responsibility for peace, security and development in the Sahel falls to the countries of the region, which must address the root causes of their problems and conflicts. However, we believe in the importance of the support that must be provided by the international community and the United Nations, taking into account in particular the challenges that arise as a result of climate change and the economic and financial crisis that originated in the richest countries.

Secondly, I underscore the fact that many of the problems that we see, in our opinion, are the results of root causes that must be dealt with through substantive change and not with palliative measures. For example, given the challenging and necessary changes that are needed to address the crisis, Argentina highlights the importance of focusing on and changing the modalities and structures of the work of the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the international financial system so that they can be instruments for sustainable development and not the reverse. Only a global economic system based on cooperation and equity will be able to respond to the root causes of conflicts related to poverty, hunger and inequality.

Thirdly and to conclude, I welcome the substantial progress that has been made in the countries of the region and the continent based on the conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, development, human rights, democracy and rule of law initiatives of regional and subregional organizations. Argentina firmly believes that this is the path that the countries of the region and the African continent in general must take.

The Minister of the Interior of Morocco, at the second regional ministerial conference on border security in North Africa and the Sahel, held last month in Rabat, said that a mechanism for the exchange of information must be created, an early warning system set up, and our legal border control instruments harmonized. He stressed that borders are areas of human, commercial and cultural exchange, and that they cannot be seen as areas of distrust, closure or exclusion. Argentina, along with the countries of Latin America that share this vision of the Minister of Morocco, hopes that the

United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel will lead to the establishment of a homeland in the Sahel.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for scheduling this important discussion. I would like to particularly thank the Secretary-General for his continued engagement and leadership on the issue of the Sahel region, demonstrated most recently by his extensive visit to the region in November, together with the President of the World Bank and other leaders of key institutions and organizations. I thank him, President Jim Yong Kim, Special Envoy Prodi and the representatives of the European Union and the African Union for their important contributions to the debate this morning. The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2013/20, which establishes a strong and united Security Council position on peace and security in the Sahel.

The Sahel region is at an important moment in its progress towards greater security, prosperity, democratic governance and the rule of law. In recent weeks, Mali has successfully elected a new President, completed the first round of legislative elections and initiated investigations by the Malian judiciary into alleged human rights violations following the 2012 coup. Mauritania has also held parliamentary elections, which is a positive step that we hope will help the country return to a normal electoral cycle.

But while we have recently seen positive steps, many challenges remain. Organized crime and drug trafficking, the proliferation of weapons, environmental issues and humanitarian crises continue to impede progress in the region. Despite the successes of the French-led international intervention in Mali, the threat from Islamist extremists remains in many parts of the country, and corruption among elites and institutions prevents State structures from acting effectively to address challenges.

That is why the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel is so important. It should be implemented as soon as possible. The integrated strategy sets out an organizing framework to address those challenges. It is a useful framework not just for the United Nations, but also for a wider set of international partners. If the implementation of the integrated strategy is to be effective, we must prioritize work on areas where a tangible and lasting impact can be made. I would like to highlight three areas in particular that the United Kingdom perceives as critical.

First, on security, we must disrupt terrorist activity and tackle organized crime by building regional capacity and regional cooperation. The United Kingdom has proposed a draft resolution tackling one aspect of that menace — ransom payments for kidnapping that fund terrorist activity in the Sahel region. We must develop a clear analysis of and approach to all such cross-border threats.

Secondly, we must focus on State-building. We should offer long-term support for political settlements, including local-level reconciliation initiatives and the integration of armed groups. To ensure the provision of basic public services, such as education and access to justice, particularly outside urban areas, we should embed transparent and accountable systems for service delivery with closer tracking of progress made.

Lastly, we must focus on resilience. Regional bodies should lead in economic cooperation and food security initiatives, ensuring their implementation at the country and local levels with the help of non-governmental organizations. Alongside that local and regional ownership, international partners should support Governments in developing and delivering well-targeted safety net schemes as a means of guarding against recurrent environmental and food shocks.

In October, the United Kingdom's Minister for Africa, Mark Simmonds, visited Timbuktu — the first British minister to do so for many years. During the visit, he noted the rich cultural heritage of the Sahel and its great potential to succeed. He saw for himself how much the region needs the international community to help it to unlock that potential. The United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel can do just that. It is time now to move it from the theoretical to the practical and unlock that potential. That requires commitment and resources, and we hope that the United Nations assets in the region, particularly the regional office in Dakar, can now be mobilized to begin the work that needs to be done in implementation.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I would like first to congratulate the French presidency on having organized this important meeting on peace and security in Africa, focused on the Sahel region and the prospects for the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy. Today's meeting amply reflects the special attention that the Security Council and the Secretary-General attach to that issue, and manifests once again the international community's awareness of the inextricable link between peace and security, on the

one hand, and economic and social development on the other.

I thank the briefers, including the Secretary-General himself, the President of the World Bank, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel and the representatives of the African Union and European Union, for their statements.

A little more than a year ago, while the Council was seeking ways to put an end to the tragedy unfolding in northern Mali, the United Nations, in particular the Security Council through resolution 2056 (2012), had the vision to make the drawing up of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel an urgent and essential issue given the complex and many problems facing the region. That initiative, in itself, is a challenge given that it involves bringing together, in a comprehensive approach, the multidimensional challenges of the humanitarian, governance, security, socioeconomic development and human rights issues that the Sahel region faces.

Today, the strategy, which we believe to be a thorough document, has become a reality. While its drafting was promising, its implementation is challenging given the objectives that it aims to achieve, the various interventions required for it to become a reality and the many factors involved in achieving the desired results. Increased mobilization by all and coordinated activities are therefore key requirements, all the more so given the realities on the ground. Those realities require a multitude of considerations, including awareness of those whom it is aimed at and their ownership of the essence of the strategy that I have mentioned above.

From that perspective, we welcome the joint visit of the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank, with the participation of the World Bank and the European Union, to the Sahel region on 7 November. That joint visit to the four countries primarily concerned by the strategy, namely, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad, is a symbol of great interest to see the partners acting together to tackle the challenge as well as an expression of solidarity for the populations concerned. That visit is therefore an important step towards mobilizing the populations and the States of the region for the effective implementation of the strategy.

In that regard, we can only welcome the positive response of those affected by the strategy, which is demonstrated by the support of the States of

the region for the strategy through their decision, adopted at the 5 November meeting in Bamako, to establish a coordination platform that will meet every six months with a flexible technical secretariat to support the coordination efforts in the region. Those are praiseworthy initiatives given that harmonizing projects initiated by various bodies under their own strategies remains a decisive factor in effective support.

The firm commitment of the international community should make it possible more easily to overcome another challenge, namely, of putting people at the heart of projects and programmes and allowing them to take ownership of them, while reconciling their expectations and the constraints of available resources. It also meets the requirement that the reality on the ground demands action. For an appropriate definition of priorities, that requires partners to be in contact with the populations in order to better understand their expectations.

Here, there is another clearly major challenge, that is funding the strategy. It is important that financial and other support take into account the constraints of the area, the risks and the time for the population to acquire the capacity for strengthened resilience. Togo therefore welcomes the funding pledges made by the World Bank and the European Union during the visit to the Sahel and calls on other donors to provide their crucial support in order to meet the expectations of the States and peoples of the region.

At a time when the international community is mobilizing for the entire Sahel region, it is clear that Mali remains the focus of the threats and challenges facing the region. We must therefore bear in mind that, with the deployment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and as Togo has previously underscored, Mali remains a pilot project in terms of implementing the strategic goals of the integrated strategy for the Sahel in terms of peace, security, stability, resilience and socioeconomic development for the Sahel.

However, the volatile security situation in northern Mali is complicated by an equally difficult one in the region of Kidal. The continuing terrorist threats, which could go as far as the heinous killing of journalists, reminds us that security and stability remain the most pressing concerns. That requires us to settle grievances, to reconcile as soon as possible the interests of the actors of the States in the Sahel region, while fully upholding their sovereignty, in order to ensure

conditions conducive to the calibrated implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

Coordination and cooperation among the States of the region, on the one hand, and among subregional organizations, on the other, are crucial in order to counter all kinds of threats, in particular, the activities of terrorist groups, arms proliferation and transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking. Such coordination and cooperation is an indication of the effectiveness of the results expected of the implemented strategy. In that regard, we are pleased with the holding in Rabat, Morocco, on 13 and 14 November of the second regional conference on border security among the States of the Sahel and the Maghreb.

The United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel brings great hope for the peoples of the Sahel region, clearly given that it is taking place in the wake of the Malian crisis and because the international community has acknowledged that if we do not take action against poverty, in particular in the context of a difficult environment that undermines the resilience of populations, threats to peace and stability, such as transnational organized crime and terrorism, will certainly find fertile ground in the most vulnerable regions.

It is therefore important to continue the momentum that has allowed for progress in the case of Mali. That is another reason that must be the engine for mobilization, in particular in terms of financial resources, to ensure that the objectives of the strategy are achieved.

Finally, Togo welcomes the adoption of the presidential statement on the issue under consideration (S/PRST/2013/20) and thanks the Moroccan delegation for having led the process that led to that adoption.

Mr. Nduhugirehe (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this important debate on peace and security in Africa, which focuses on the Sahel region. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his commitment and his briefing. Also, I welcome Mr. Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank; Mr. Romano Prodi, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel; and Mr. Michel Reveyrand de Menthon, Special Representative of the European Union for the Sahel, and thank them for their respective presentations.

The delegation of Rwanda would like to endorse the statement of Ambassador Tête António, Permanent

Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, whom I welcome. I will add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Rwanda welcomes the adoption of the presidential statement on the Sahel (S/PRST/2013/20), initiated by Morocco. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the unwavering commitment of Morocco to supporting the issue of the Sahel in the past two years as a member of the Security Council. We have had the open debate organized last December, presided over by the Foreign Minister of Morocco (S/PV.6882) and sanctioned by a presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/26); a briefing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in September on the fight against terrorism in the Sahel, under Morocco's chairmanship; and the presidential statement that the Council has just adopted.

As the presidential statement just adopted underscores, the problem of the Sahel is multidimensional faceted. There are aspects related to governance, security, humanitarian, human rights and development issues. Rwanda therefore supports a coordinated, comprehensive and integrated approach that places priority on the pursuit of lasting solutions to the root causes of the crisis, which are primarily linked to governance and development.

Since the Libyan revolution and the subsequent proliferation of weapons throughout the region, terrorism and insecurity have become ongoing threats to the countries of the Sahel. I take this opportunity to commend the African and Malian forces that, with the decisive support of French troops of Operation Serval, were able to free Mali from the terrorists from the North. We also welcome the significant efforts made by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

Despite the progress that has been achieved, the Sahelo-Saharan region continues to face security challenges, in particular from the regrouped terrorist movements in northern Mali and the disturbing situation in Kidal. These groups, whose operations are not limited to a single country, pose an ongoing threat to Mali and the Sahel as a whole. The countries of the region must therefore strengthen their security cooperation, particularly cross-border security, in order to combat terrorism, transnational crime, and the proliferation and illicit trafficking of weapons and drugs in the region in a more effective and coordinated manner. In that regard, the regional good-neighbourly relations

and the exchange of information and communications, including in the framework of the Nouakchott Process, are important to achieving significant progress.

The fight against terrorism also requires the States of the region to build their capacities to effectively control their own territories and borders and to fight criminal and terrorist networks. In that regard, we welcome the convening in Rabat on 13 and 14 November of the second regional conference on border security between the Sahel and the Maghreb. Such cooperative mechanisms between the countries of the Sahel and the Maghreb are of critical importance to the effective and coordinated fight against the terrorist groups that sow destruction in the region.

As I said earlier, development issues are at the heart of the crisis in the Sahel. Education, infrastructure, energy, agriculture and development projects — especially quick-impact projects and those that create jobs for young people — are important to fighting terrorism and organized crime. In that framework, the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel is an ideal vehicle to address the multidimensional problems of the region, above all development. In that context, we welcome the joint visit to the region made by the Secretary-General, the President of the World Bank and Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank, with the participation of the African Union and other partners. We believe that the international community's evident readiness to support the region's struggle for peace and development is an important dynamic that will surely be fruitful.

In that respect, we encourage improved coordination of the activities of regional and international partners in Mali and the Sahel. Similarly, Rwanda hopes that the ministerial meeting on the integrated strategy, held in Bamako on 5 November, gave renewed impetus for improved coordination of the implementation of the strategy and provided the region with an opportunity to assume ownership of that instrument, which must be wielded in coordination with the States of the Sahel, West Africa and the Maghreb, and with the assistance of the United Nations Office for West Africa.

In conclusion, we underscore once again the need for the countries of the Sahel, with the support of bilateral and multilateral partners, to address the root causes of the crisis in their region, in particular governance and development. We also hope that those countries will assume ownership of the United Nations integrated strategy so as to ensure its rapid and coherent

implementation. To that end, capacity-building and cross-border cooperation and information exchange are critical in dealing with the scourges of that region, including drug and arms trafficking and terrorism.

We are convinced that the deployment of the African Union Mission for Mali and the Sahel, in synergy with the United Nations and other partners, will greatly contribute to improving the situation in the region.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank France for giving the Sahel pride of place during its presidency of the Security Council. My thanks also go to the Secretary-General, the President of the World Bank, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, the Permanent Observer of the African Union and the Special Representative of the European Union for their briefings, which have shown the extent to which the whole international community is mobilizing for security and development in the Sahel region.

During the past year, attention has focused on resolving the multifaceted crisis in Mali. Reducing the terrorist threat, the restoration of the territorial integrity of Mali and the return to constitutional order in Bamako have been major advances. However, we all know that this crisis is the most acute and most recent manifestation of a recurrent cycle of insecurity in the Sahel.

While the causes of that insecurity are often local, its ramifications are transnational. In response, we need an integrated regional approach. In this regard, we strongly welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to conduct a joint visit to the region with the President of the World Bank and with the participation of the African Union, the European Union and the African Development Bank. The visit helped to initiate the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and to unify the efforts of the international community. It resulted in particular in the establishment of a coordination platform that will be initially chaired by Mali. We now have a unique opportunity to strengthen the partnership between the international community and the countries of the Sahel region and to review how we cooperate.

In the context of the close, long-standing partnership of Luxembourg with several countries of the region, including Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger, we have always stressed the intrinsic link between security and development and the promotion and protection of

human rights. We welcome the recognition of this link in the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. With a view to the implementation of the strategy, we wish to focus on three elements.

First, in order to sustainably stabilize the Sahel, the countries of the region will be invited to pursue their efforts at regional and interregional cooperation in addressing their common security challenges. Action is needed in the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime, controlling the flow of weapons and the management of border areas.

Meanwhile, we must address the root causes of instability. In most countries of the Sahel, the lack of development, inequality and poverty are the source of much tension. Thus, the creation of viable economic alternatives for the millions of young people currently without prospects is of fundamental importance. We must focus on food security, productive capacity-building and support for local entrepreneurship that creates jobs, as well as on further economic integration, particularly in terms of energy and infrastructure. For us, particular attention must be paid to strengthening State institutions. They must be held accountable, promote local governance and provide basic services to all citizens, while helping to ease internal tensions and strengthen social cohesion. The participation of women, who are too often excluded from decision-making, should be encouraged.

Only concerted, sustained and proactive action on the part of the States of the region — action that revolves around national priorities while integrating the dimension of regional cooperation — will stabilize the region and promote its socioeconomic development. However, no country in the Sahel is able to face alone the challenges faced by the region. Joint efforts are required. Within the framework of their support for the region, the United Nations system and all multilateral and bilateral partners should strengthen and coordinate their efforts, taking into account national and regional initiatives and the concerns linked to appropriation.

Humanitarian assistance must also be stepped up in order to help the Sahelian populations to strengthen their resilience. We already know that 16 million people are at risk of malnutrition next year in the Sahel. Only 59 per cent of the humanitarian appeal this year has been covered. More needs to be done. Luxembourg will continue to take an active part in efforts made under the impetus of the Office for the Coordination

of Humanitarian Affairs and its Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel.

I will conclude by thanking the delegation of Morocco for having prepared and facilitated the presidential statement that the Council has just adopted (S/PRST/2013/20). The strategy for the Sahel is in place. The Security Council has endorsed it, and now it is time to fully implement it.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council and the Secretary-General must rightly give priority to the humanitarian situation in the Sahel region. That is the very reason we welcomed the appointment of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Sahel, who is a man of politics of world renown, Mr. Romano Prodi. We are grateful to Mr. Prodi for his significant work in carrying out his mandate.

The region of the Sahel suffers from instability and serious socioeconomic challenges. The processes ongoing there are difficult and multifaceted and have the most heterogeneous root causes. It is clear that the disjointed measures to stem crises are a priori ineffective. In the Sahel, indeed, there are clear links between security and development.

In those conditions, resolving the problems of the region can only be done in a comprehensive manner. Steps taken by the States of the region should be buoyed by a wide range of measures undertaken by the international community, for a swift settlement to the troubled situation in this vast region of Africa is in all of our interests.

We note that this is the very foundation of the approach for drawing up, under Mr. Prodi's leadership, the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, and we reiterate our support for that strategy. Its consistent implementation should play an important role in bolstering security and stability in the region, establishing sustainable socioeconomic development and countering new threats and challenges. We hope that set objectives will be achieved. We intend to provide assistance in that process.

It is our conviction that in carrying out the strategy, national priorities must be taken into account, in particular, those of State recipients of aid. We are pleased that the countries of the region are actively stating their support for the strategy and are seeking to implement it and are engaging in productive joint cooperation.

Today, it is clear that the contradictory processes in a number of North African and Middle Eastern countries were a strong catalyst for an escalation of the terrorist risk, the spread of extremist ideologies and the uncontrolled spread of weapons. Those went hand in hand, in some cases, with the interference of outside forces, with significant destabilizing consequences.

We are very concerned about the continuing threat of the Sahel region turning into a haven for the activities of terrorists and criminal structures, including the illegal spread of weapons and drug trafficking. We must note that at present in the Saharan-Sahel region, there are mutually beneficial cooperation arrangements among large terrorist structures, as well as the danger of sleeping cells and even armed groups that engage in plundering and rivalry with one another for control of drug trafficking routes.

The crisis in Mali was a serious challenge for the States of the Sahel, which speaks to the complex and intertwined nature of the problem. It was a true threat to the security of the region and far beyond it. We hope that with the support of the international community, the Malian authorities will successfully reinstate constitutional order, and order in general, across the country, ensuring sustainable and progressive socioeconomic development.

In conclusion, we should like to thank the delegation of Morocco for the preparation of the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/20), which we supported.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): Let me commence by expressing our gratitude to the French presidency of the Security Council for having convened this important meeting to review the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. I would like to thank the Secretary-General and other briefers for their comprehensive briefings. We welcome the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/20) made earlier today, which once again demonstrated the Security Council's determination to address the complex security and political challenges and advance peace, stability and development in the Sahel region.

A coherent, comprehensive, and coordinated approach and consistent engagement from regional and international actors remain vitally important. We are grateful to the Secretary-General, his Special Envoy for the Sahel, the Special Representatives for West and Central Africa and the relevant United Nations missions and entities operating on the ground for their support

for the countries of the region and their contribution to ensuring progress towards the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

Azerbaijan also commends the efforts of the countries of the Sahel and relevant regional organizations, including those aimed at enhancing interregional cooperation and coordination. In that regard, we welcome the recent ministerial meeting on the integrated strategy, held in Bamako under the chairmanship of Mali. We take positive note of the decision taken at the meeting to set a coordination platform of the Sahel strategy and the announcement regarding the establishment of a flexible technical secretariat to support coordination efforts in the region.

National capacity-building, strong early warning mechanisms and harmonized approaches are necessary for effectively addressing cross-border threats facing the region. We are encouraged by the determination of the States of the Sahelo-Saharan region to intensify cooperation and coordination with a view to developing inclusive interregional border security and collective anti-terrorism strategies. The recent second regional conference on border security between the Sahel and Maghreb States, hosted by Morocco in Rabat, was a timely and important forum to that end.

Further promotion of national reconciliation and intercommunal dialogue is another essential task. In that context, we support the ongoing national, international, regional and subregional efforts to promote the ongoing political processes in Mali and welcome the commitment of the Malian Government to address the root causes of the multifaceted crisis in that country.

The continued international support for national Governments in the region is required, with a view to enabling them to address the most pressing needs of the affected populations and to implement resilience-based approaches to sustainable development. We welcome the recent joint visit to the region by the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank and the announcements of planned funding in support of national and regional efforts.

In conclusion, I would like once again to underscore the importance of the continued strong commitment of the international community to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of the countries of the Sahel region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I will now make a statement in my national capacity. Naturally, I would like to thank the speakers for their presentations on the challenges in the Sahel and their proposals to respond to them.

The countries of the Sahel are facing transnational complex challenges in all areas — governance, security, the humanitarian situation and the serious challenges of development. As the speakers stated, those phenomena know no borders and thus call for a common approach. It is right that the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, which the Secretary-General launched in September 2012 at the request of the Security Council, seeks to adopt a comprehensive approach to those challenges.

The expected reinforcement of the United Nations Office for West Africa at Dakar will play an essential coordinating role between all players for its implementation.

However, that strategy would be meaningless if it were not supported by the mobilization of the entire international community. In that context, I welcome the significant pledges for the countries of the Sahel that were announced last November by the World Bank and the European Union. France, the top bilateral donor in the region, has decided to raise its commitment to €900 million for the years 2014-2015, which amounts to more than \$1.2 billion. We also believe that the action fund for the Sahel proposed by Mr. Prodi and to be managed by the African Development Bank could make a useful contribution to international efforts within the framework of the United Nations integrated strategy. For those investments to be effective, however, they must be aligned with the needs of the States concerned, and such proposals must be quickly translated into concrete projects for the peoples of the Sahel.

An estimated 10 million people in the region have suffered as a result of food insecurity in 2013. It is our collective duty to improve the access of those people to basic services, such as transportation, water, food, education and health. The development of desert spaces must also be a major focus of our efforts, in particular through support for shepherding activities and the development of the infrastructure that will allow such spaces to be opened up.

To address those challenges, one word strikes me as essential: trust. Without trust among all of the States

of the region, we will not be able to offer a coordinated response to the transnational challenges. Trust among all the States concerned — among the States of West Africa as well as those of the Maghreb — is crucial in order to collectively attack the region's challenges. That is indeed the meaning of the presidential statement that we have just adopted (S/PRST/2013/20) at the initiative of our Moroccan colleagues.

With particular regard to the matter of security, terrorist and trafficking groups in the region recognize no borders, which makes a coordinated approach all the more necessary. In that context, we welcome the two conferences on borders, held in Tripoli in 2012 and in Rabat in 2013. We also hail the cooperation and coordination mechanism established as part of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, which was agreed on 5 November in Bamako by the ministers of all the States in the region. That platform, chaired for two years by Mali, with a secretariat provided by the African Union and the United Nations, has the advantage of bringing together all the States of West Africa and the Maghreb, as well as the relevant regional and international organizations. The major country partners would find it useful to associate themselves with that mechanism.

Both in its national capacity and as part of the framework of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, France stands committed alongside the States of the Sahel to strengthening security in the region. That is why we are hosting a meeting next week on drug trafficking and its consequences for peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel. The deleterious effects of drug trafficking, which encourages corruption and undermines the governance of States, deserve a strengthened collective response.

Moreover, I would like to reiterate our commitment to the peoples of the Sahel as they face the challenges before them. After the emergency in Mali, it is high time for the international community to confront the root causes of the crisis in the Sahel. There can be no security in the Sahel without development. The reverse is also true. Improved security is indispensable for the region's development.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are no more speakers on my list.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.