

**Security Council**

Sixty-ninth year

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Thursday, 11 December 2014 10 a.m.

New York

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Cherif .....	(Chad)
<i>Members:</i>	Argentina .....	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia .....	Mr. Quinlan
	Chile .....	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	China .....	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France .....	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan .....	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania .....	Mrs. Jakubonė
	Luxembourg .....	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria .....	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea .....	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation .....	Mr. Ilichev
	Rwanda .....	Mr. Nibishaka
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . .	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America .....	Mr. Pressman

**Agenda**

Peace and security in Africa

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Peace and security in Africa**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, to participate in this meeting.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Sellassie.

**Ms. Sellassie** (*spoke in French*): I am pleased to inform the Security Council of the latest developments in the Sahel. The particular and sustained attention that the Security Council devotes to the Sahel as a region with unique characteristics allows us to take an approach that integrates the regional dimensions of the challenges. Without such an approach, conflicts and crises would be resolved in one country only to reappear in another.

In the realm of governance, the Sahel region continues to suffer from a lack of basic services, social exclusion and barriers to trade and investment. The recent outbreak of the Ebola epidemic in Mali may prove to be one shock too many for the region. That new challenge deserves all our attention. It is vital for the countries of the Sahel to develop the necessary capacities to prevent the spread of the epidemic.

*(spoke in English)*

The crisis in Burkina Faso and the persistent conflict in Mali attest to the fact that our efforts in the Sahel will not be productive unless the countries of the region commit to a certain standard of governance. The security situation in the Sahel continues to be impacted by the crises in Libya, northern Nigeria, northern Mali and the Central African Republic. The persistent allegations that the Islamic State has set up training camps in Libya are particularly worrisome. If the situation in Libya is not quickly brought under control, many States of the region could be destabilized in the very near future.

In Mali, despite progress achieved in the inter-Malian talks in Algiers, the security situation

in the north has deteriorated, with the intensification of deadly attacks targeting peacekeepers and communities along the border with the Niger. It is encouraging that the recent meeting of the African countries contributing troops to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), hosted by the Niger, concluded that there was a need to strengthen regional security cooperation mechanisms. I am also pleased that the Council has held a brainstorming meeting to consider options to address those challenges, including through the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

The unspeakable Boko Haram atrocities in northern Nigeria have become a major threat to some Sahel communities and countries. An estimated 100,000 people have fled to the Diffa region of the Niger and some 10,000 more are in Chad and Cameroon. Perhaps more alarming are the recent allegations that Boko Haram is recruiting rebels among the refugee populations.

The interconnections between terrorist and criminal networks in Libya, Mali and northern Nigeria are becoming clearer. Those networks provide the markets for the exchange of weapons, fighters and other forms of illicit trade, including drug trafficking. It is estimated that close to 20,000 firearms from Libya have crossed into the Sahel, and the greater part of the 18 tons of cocaine, worth \$1.25 billion, that are dumped in West Africa transit through the Sahel region. It is worth noting that the profits from that illicit trafficking by far exceed the security budgets of most countries of the region. In view of the complexity and regionalization of threats, my Office intends to work more closely with MINUSMA, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and other relevant United Nations entities in order to enhance regional analysis and programming.

Furthermore, particular attention needs to be paid to the thousands of migrants who cross the Sahel and the Sahara en route towards Europe and the Middle East. Unfortunately, that practice of migration will only increase in the prevailing security and humanitarian conditions and can only lead to increased loss of life and the recruitment of desperate migrants into armed groups. More disturbing is the fact that 60 per cent of the human trafficking victims detected in the region are children.

Humanitarian indicators across the Sahel remain disquieting. Five million more people have become food-

insecure since the last reporting period. The number of children affected by acute malnutrition in the Sahel also increased from 5 million in January to 6.4 million today. Of those, 1.6 million require treatment for severe malnutrition. In addition, spiralling insecurity and conflicts have displaced 3.3 million people, representing a twofold increase from 1.6 million in January. With just over \$1.1 billion provided by donors to date against a \$1.9-billion appeal, humanitarian interventions in the Sahel remain underfunded.

Since assuming office in May, I have focused on engaging with key stakeholders with a view to gaining an understanding of their perspectives, taking stock of the progress made and identifying existing challenges. I have urged leaders and Heads of State in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger to address challenges affecting the Sahel through a regional approach and have pledged the support of the United Nations to implement initiatives in the Sahel. I have been engaging with major partners working on the Sahel to emphasize the importance of coordination and coherence. Building on those consultations, and following up on the visit of the Secretary-General to the Sahel last year, I convened a meeting of major partners in November that resulted in the establishment of an International Contact Group on the Sahel. In order to enhance regional ownership of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, I have been engaging with Governments in the Sahel and regional organizations to seek convergence with their priorities.

Since my last briefing (see S/PV.7203), progress has been achieved in terms of mainstreaming the priorities of the strategy into existing programmatic frameworks. Allow me to highlight a few examples. Under the resilience pillar, the European Union-led Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative partnership, with a pledged contribution of €1.5 billion from the European Union for 2014-2020, continued to provide a critical framework for regional cooperation on resilience. The country resilience priority plans for Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger and Chad will be reviewed in mid-December. Meanwhile, a World Bank-United Nations Fund for Population Activities programme of \$207 million to manage population dynamics in the Sahel is being considered for approval.

Under the governance pillar, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been supporting Mali in mainstreaming social cohesion in the delivery of social services, and has trained 300 community

mediators. It has also been supporting the Niger in promoting durable development and inclusive growth. UNDP has been building the capacity of Government institutions in Mauritania and the Niger on conflict prevention, the protection of human rights and transparent electoral processes. At the regional level, UNDP and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate have jointly embarked on a study to assess the perceptions of communities living in border areas with respect to the drivers of radicalization, insecurity and violent extremism in eight Sahel countries.

Under the security pillar, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has been supporting the development of accessible, efficient and accountable criminal justice systems in the Sahel to combat illicit trafficking, organized crime, terrorism and corruption in the region. The United Nations Office for West Africa has also supported the Lake Chad Basin Commission in the development of a regional counter-terrorism strategy.

I am also glad to report that several non-United Nations partners continue to implement initiatives in the Sahel that complement the broad objectives of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. In January, the World Bank launched the new multi-donor Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Trust Fund. With initial grant funding of \$75 million, the programme will assist more than 1.5 million people in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Senegal. In October, the Board of the African Development Bank approved a \$240-million programme to enhance the productivity of the agro-silvo-pastoral and fishery sectors, including through investments in rural infrastructure, in Burkina Faso, Chad, the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Senegal.

I am pleased to report that a regional approach to addressing security threats in the Sahel is also being promoted by the African Union through the Nouakchott Process for the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahel.

Given the deterioration of the political and security situation in the region and its adverse impact on humanitarian and development gains, the need for sustaining Security Council attention to the Sahel is greater than ever. Since my appointment, my Office has made great strides in terms of helping put together the necessary structures and coordination mechanisms to ensure a more coherent approach of the United Nations

system and the international community at large in the Sahel region.

Despite these important and necessary steps, the Sahel region continues to face multifaceted challenges to peace and development. The situation calls for stronger commitment on the part of Governments of the region to improving governance and undertaking changes that are required for the achievement of the objectives of the strategy, including by working towards greater regional cooperation and economic integration.

*(spoke in French)*

On the basis of all this, my priorities for the coming months will be, first, to support the accelerated implementation of national and regional projects, in close collaboration with regional partners. Secondly, I shall help to strengthen the coordination of assistance from the international community to the Sahel, including through the International Contact Group on the Sahel. Finally, I will seek to promote regional ownership by strengthening cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Ministerial Coordination Platform and the Group of Five Sahel.

**The President** *(spoke in French)*: I thank Ms. Sellassie for her briefing.

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

**Mr. Pressman** (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Sellassie for her briefing today and for her important work. We appreciate her close work with the countries and people of the Sahel region and with international partners towards achieving sustainable security and prosperity for the people of the Sahel.

The States of the Sahel region face many complex threats to peace and security. Among the most visible and pressing of these is threat from violent extremism posed by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Boko Haram and other terrorist groups. But there are other challenges as well: enduringly weak institutions and flagging governance reforms, as we witnessed recently in Burkina Faso; cyclical environmental shocks that have contributed to a situation in which 20 million people experience food insecurity; refugees and internally displaced persons who need basic assistance in Mali; vast and sometimes ungoverned spaces; fragile economies and poverty. These factors all contribute to

unnecessary suffering and create the conditions under which terrorists and transnational organized criminal organizations thrive. These challenges are neither unique to distinct States nor new, and the threats they pose unfortunately do not end at national borders.

We commend the Sahel States for their efforts to address these intertwined challenges, including their commitment to disrupting extremist networks, such as their sustained efforts in Mali that began with Operation Serval and the African-led International Support Mission in Mali and continue today with their contributions to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. The international community must work towards reinforcing the region's capacity and commitment to addressing all of these threats, both to their individual countries and across the region, in a manner that continues to protect and respect human rights and the rule of law.

We have already seen the benefits of the region enhancing its own coordination and cooperation to address transnational security challenges. At the initiative of the region, the Group of Five Sahel is working to enhance security and development cooperation through such funding initiatives as the Priority Investment Programme, which aims at pairing donor institutions with Sahel Governments, infrastructure projects and the establishment of a Group of Five Sahel secretariat. Furthermore, the 7 October Lake Chad Basin Commission summit in Niamey underscored the commitment of the regional Governments to improving coordination to address the threat of Boko Haram to the subregion.

But there will be much to do over the next year. We welcome the important work that has been done so far to integrate national strategies within the region, but our primary focus should not be so much on process as on outcomes — that is, what are the concrete efforts to combat violence and terrorism that work best in the Sahel region, and what can we, as the international community, do to support them? A comprehensive and coordinated strategy is important, no doubt, but the measure of our success must be real solutions that impact real people's lives — solutions that address security, humanitarian, human rights and governance problems.

The United Nations — including through the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, as well as the Special Representatives for

West and Central Africa — is an integral part of those efforts. The high-level engagement of these officials with senior Government and the particularly close relationships that they have developed with the leaders of African Union Commission, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the European Union have clearly increased coordination. Deconflicting overlapping or redundant initiatives should remain central to their efforts. If that is to be successful, it is also important that the Sahel States take strong ownership of this engagement, and cross-pollination is emphasized not just at the senior political levels, but at the working level as well.

For our part, the United States is fully committed to supporting regional counter-terrorism efforts and to the wider promotion of stability across the Sahel region. President Obama, recognizing the danger posed to the region and beyond by this nexus of failing institutions, insecurity, humanitarian challenges and poverty, announced the Security Governance Initiative in August, through which the United States has committed \$65 million for the first year to developing the security sector institutional capacity in six partner countries, five of which are either part of the United Nations Sahel initiative or its immediate neighbours. The Initiative will provide tailored support to national capacity-building and security-sector governance, including through access to justice, countering transnational threats and contributing to regional and international security and stability. Across the Sahel, the United States provides assistance to build the capacity of military, law enforcement and civilian and civilian actors through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership and other initiatives.

We also remain committed to continuing our long-standing efforts to address the serious humanitarian and development challenges in the region. The United States has provided over \$275 million in 2014 for humanitarian aid to the region. In a region where, as the Special Envoy has told us, some 20 million are food-insecure and some 6.5 million children are at risk of moderate or severe malnutrition, we have focused the largest proportion of that funding on the humanitarian sectors most in need: agriculture and food security, nutrition and economic recovery. We applaud the efforts of the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel, Robert Piper, to integrate humanitarian and development efforts throughout the region, including

through coordinated support to refugees, internally displaced persons and affected host communities.

For those bilateral and multilateral programmes to be truly successful, the Governments in the region must also redouble their efforts to make institutional and governance reforms — a critical pillar of the United Nations Sahel strategy. As we saw in Burkina Faso recently, when political leaders turn their focus away from their commitment to constitutionally mandated processes, such as democratic elections, then the Government loses its legitimacy and the trust of its people. It becomes less stable, not more so. The transitional Government of Burkina Faso must pay particular care to ensure that effective preparation is conducted for the previously scheduled national elections in November 2015.

No matter how much humanitarian assistance is provided, without important governance, rule-of-law and democratic reforms, no amount of international support will lead to the concrete positive gains that the peoples of the region desire, we all seek and the region requires. We welcome Special Envoy Sellassie's efforts to continue to encourage the region's leaders to undertake the kind of difficult institutional reforms needed for lasting peace. I again thank her for leading the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. We anticipate strong results from her work over the coming year and look forward to our continued cooperation towards achieving peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

**Mr. Quinlan** (Australia): As itself a Sahel country, Mr. President, I particularly welcome Chad's leadership in organizing this briefing. I would like to thank Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Hiroute Guebre Sellassie for her update on the efforts and response of the United Nations to implement the integrated strategy for the Sahel, which is not an easy task.

Since June, we have seen a very sharp increase in targeted attacks against United Nations peacekeepers in Mali, a deteriorating security situation in Libya, political instability in Burkina Faso, barbaric terrorist acts by Boko Haram and the first cases of Ebola in Mali. Chronic fragility and instability continue to impact the region and to pose a direct threat to civilians. There are almost 25 million people in the Sahel — certainly more than 20 million — who face food insecurity right now. That is over 65 per cent of the population, which is substantially more than the entire population of my own

country. The region hosts over 1 million refugees. Its population, which is the fastest-growing in the world, is expected to double in the next 20 to 25 years, which can only worsen the challenges.

The strategy can be a useful tool within the United Nations system, and, more broadly, to provide a multidimensional approach to address problems that transcend the borders in the region. As always, however, the challenge is in its implementation, which has struggled to date. However, the strategy probably remains the initiative with the most potential to bring the existing plethora of security and development actors under a single framework. With the large number of actors in the Sahel, coordination is crucial but still insufficient. A recent mapping exercise showed that many of the core countries of the region were covered by at least seven different regional or international Sahel-focused strategies. We must enhance coordination, or the United Nations Sahel strategy itself will fail. At the same time, coordination cannot be a substitute for concrete action.

It has been just over a year since the Secretary-General's joint visit to region, together with the Presidents of the World Bank and the African Development Bank and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. That is the model we need to achieve results in complex situations like the Great Lakes and the Sahel. When the Council last met on the Sahel in June (see S/PV.7203), the Special Envoy spoke of the importance of breaking down the institutional barriers between those organizations to ensure better targeted and coordinated action based on areas of comparative advantage. I would welcome any further assessment from her as to how that is being accomplished in practice. Greater clarity on the division of labour between her Office and the United Nations Office for West Africa would also be useful.

We are encouraged by the growing leadership from the region, including through the Ministerial Coordination Platform. National ownership and political will are obviously essential to achieve lasting progress. The participation of the Group of Five Sahel in the most recent meeting of the Platform, held in Bamako on 18 November, was a necessary sign of increasing coherence and cooperation. We welcome the Special Envoy's information today about the establishment of an international contact group on the Sahel.

Such cooperation is vital in particular in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. The Sahel has been particularly affected by that scourge, with Al-Qaida affiliates in the region exploiting local conflicts and weak State authority and taking advantage of trafficking and criminal networks to move around arms and resources. The trend of small-arms smuggling in the region is increasing. Nowhere is that more prevalent than in Libya — a pressing problem given weak institutions and the continuing flow of weapons out of the country. Clearly, the Security Council needs to give Libya more attention. The interphase between terrorism and transnational crime in the region is clear. It is obviously fuelling conflict. That is why the debate to be convened by Chad's presidency next week, as well as its initiative to put forward a draft resolution to address the linkages between terrorism and transnational organized crime holistically, will be so useful. We pay tribute to French counter-terrorism efforts in the Sahel through its regional military force, Operation Barkhane. We also commend the efforts to operationalize the Multinational Joint Task Force to combat Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin. The Council should support that initiative.

To deal with the terrorist threat we need not only security and law-enforcement approaches, but also efforts to counter violent extremism at the community level. Programmes need to target youth in particular, the largest demographic constituency in the region, perhaps half of whom are without jobs and whom we know are highly susceptible to radicalization. We urge the United Nations to leverage the full range of development and security entities to help build community resilience against terrorism.

The Council's Al-Qaida sanctions regime remains a critical partner for national and regional counter-terrorism strategies in the Sahel. Despite the Council's recent focus on Iraq and Syria, the Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee and its Monitoring Team continue to target Sahel-based Al-Qaida affiliates. The Committee's most recent listings, on 19 November, included two Libya-based entities associated with Al-Qaida in the Maghreb. The key is for all United Nations entities, missions and offices in the region, as well as agencies, counter-terrorism bodies and the relevant sanctions committees and groups of experts to work together in support of joined-up solutions to address terrorism and organized crime — for example, by helping to strengthen border security.

Beyond security, we also need to ensure that we tackle the root causes of cyclical crises in the Sahel region, including by strengthening governance, in particular at the regional level. Providing concrete support and programming to strengthen governance over such a vast and diverse expanse is obviously a challenge, but it is one that must be prioritized. We need to see concrete projects on the ground to kick-start change. We would welcome any further views from the Special Envoy on how greater progress can be made in this area.

In conclusion, while we remain confident that the Sahel strategy is the right tool to address the challenges of the region in a coordinated manner — and while we are thankful for the Special Envoy's efforts in that direction — there is a very real risk that, absent concrete programmes and real coordination, the strategy will atrophy. We therefore continue to look to the leadership of the Special Envoy to drive forward implementation.

**Sir Mark Lyall Grant** (United Kingdom): I thank you, Sir, for having convened this meeting. I also thank the Special Envoy for her briefing and I offer her our full support.

The immediate challenges posed by Ebola virus disease in West Africa have attracted much of the international community's attention in recent months. However, it is important that we do not lose sight of a subregion that faces its own particular concerns and is thus far managing to avoid a full-blown assault from Ebola.

Almost two years on from the beginning of the crisis in Mali, the Sahel region remains on the front line in the struggles against jihadist terrorists — such as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Ansar Eddine and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa — drug-trafficking and organized crime, food insecurity and poverty, and political instability. As we have seen with recent events in Burkina Faso, the Sahel region needs the support of the international community if it is to stay on the path to long-lasting security and development. That means not only responding to crises effectively — and I commend the leadership of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States in Burkina Faso — but also taking early preventative action to avoid instability and violence, and in this area we must do better.

Success in resolving the Mali crisis continues to elude us. In 2014, 31 members of the United Nations

Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) have been killed and almost 100 wounded in attacks by terrorists. I commend the brave MINUSMA peacekeepers, in particular those from Chad, who face such terrorist threats on a daily basis. Attacks against United Nations staff are totally unacceptable. While work is under way in the Council to strengthen the Mission's capabilities and its resilience to the terrorist threat, that alone will not address the underlying causes of the crisis. Only a political settlement will enable Mali to move forward to a peaceful future. I commend the work of Algeria and other mediators in bringing the parties to the negotiating table. But let us be clear that the responsibility falls to the parties themselves to find the peace that Mali's citizens deserve. It is important that they redouble their efforts, work in a spirit of compromise and joint endeavour, and find practical arrangements that will enable the citizens of Mali to pick up their lives once again.

The challenges facing the Sahel come from both within and outside the region. To the South, the barbaric behaviour of Boko Haram has shocked the world, yet it has also brought Nigeria and her neighbours, the Niger, Chad and Cameroon, to a better understanding of and cooperation on mutual security. The United Kingdom is supporting, and will continue to support, this important work.

To the north, the prolonged struggle in Libya continues to have repercussions for the Sahel, and the growth of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant could threaten the region further. Meanwhile the trafficking in weapons and narcotics across porous borders continues to damage the social fabric and prevent States from governing effectively. In the face of these challenges, United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel provides a strong framework to enable the region to tackle these diverse challenges. Its three pillars, of governance, security and resilience, remain, in our view, the right ones. Yet much more can be done to implement the strategy's priorities. As the Special Envoy highlighted this morning, governance is critical. We must work with Sahel States to strengthen human rights, including the rights of women, and help to build their capacity to deliver core services, particularly outside the urban areas.

On security, we must continue to build States' capacity to tackle organized crime, counter terrorism and manage borders more effectively. The work of the

Global Counterterrorism Forum and the creation of the Group of Five Sahel can help to develop more effective regional approaches.

On resilience, we need to upstream work on developing food security, including preparing for shocks through regional cooperation. With a further United Nations appeal for the Sahel expected in February next year, the risks of not doing this important work are clear to see. The United Kingdom recently announced a multi-year assistance programme for the Sahel worth more than \$160 million.

In coordinating international work on the Sahel, the Special Envoy will have an important role to play. As she takes forward the implementation of the integrated strategy into 2015, she and her team in Dakar will have the United Kingdom's full support.

**Ms. Lucas** (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank Chad for having convened this meeting devoted to the Sahel under its presidency of the Security Council. My thanks also go to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ms. Guebre Sellassie, for her briefing on the progress achieved in the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. Her statement rightly underscored the important need for the international community to have a coherent and coordinated regional approach that is complementary to national policies to strengthen governance, security, resilience and development in the Sahel region.

Since the last time the Special Envoy addressed the Council, in June (see S/PV.7203), the security situation has continued to deteriorate in the north of Mali, in Libya and around Lake Chad. Armed conflicts, the proliferation of arms, transnational organized crime and drug trafficking, and the links between such criminal activities and terrorist groups, continue to pose a serious threats to peace and security region.

The rise in violence has for further exacerbated the extremely fragile humanitarian situation in the Sahel. As the Special Envoy has just recalled, at least 20 million people remain exposed to food insecurity and more than 6 million children are at risk of acute malnutrition.

Today no State is in a position to meet those challenges alone. Business as usual is no longer an option. Strengthening regional cooperation is imperative. Two initiatives are under way to that end, which we welcome. On the one hand, there is the

Ministerial Coordination Platform, chaired from 2013 to 2015 by Mali, which benefits from crucial national and regional ownership and is supported by a technical secretariat. On the other hand we have the Group of Five Sahel, made up of Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Chad. The third meeting of the Ministerial Platform was held on 18 November in the presence, for the first time, of the permanent secretary of the Group of Five Sahel. In that context, I would like to ask Ms. Sellassie to what extent closer work between the two initiatives — the Ministerial Platform and the Group of Five Sahel — could build trust among the countries of the region to pave the way for stepped up security cooperation.

In late October and early November, we witnessed an unprecedented popular uprising in Burkina Faso, which led to the resignation of the President and to the establishment of transitional authorities in a peaceful manner with respect for the Constitution. These events illustrate the importance of strengthening the legitimacy of States as a priority.

The Sahel countries will undoubtedly require additional security capacities to meet the challenges I have mentioned. At the same time, it is important to encourage the emergence of institutions that are accountable to citizens and able to provide basic services to the entire population, including access to justice. That would help to reduce internal tensions and find lasting solutions to the root causes of instability in the region. The participation of women, who are often left outside decision-making process, must be encouraged. Civil society must also be able to play its full role. Governance that promotes development and the resilience of democratic institutions serve as effective bastions against violent radicalization and the emergence of national and regional conflicts.

In parallel, particular attention must be paid to border areas and to infrastructures that facilitate regional integration. That will also make it possible to improve territorial control and strengthen the authority of the State throughout its territory. In that regard, I should like to mention the fact that since 2012, as part of our regional cooperation programmes, Luxembourg has been financing, among other programmes, in partnership with the West African Economic and Monetary Union, a regional programme of the United Nations Capital Development Fund known as Local Cross-Border Initiative. The programme aims to strengthen the governance framework for cross-



border cooperation in West Africa. At the regional and national levels, it involves the adoption of strategies to strengthen cooperation beyond borders. At the local level, the programme has made it possible to develop support tools for local authorities for financing cross-order investment. The tranche of the programme related to the Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso clearly illustrates the resolve of the local authorities of these three countries to work together to create cross-border socioeconomic development areas, which are also an important part of regional integration.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the full support of Luxembourg in this task. Bolstered by these cooperation programmes and Luxembourg's long-standing relations with the countries of the Sahel region, my country will continue to be resolutely engaged in strengthening international efforts for peace, security and development in the region — three objectives to which the populations of the Sahel have long aspired. Let us not dash their hopes.

**Mr. Laro** (Nigeria): I wish to thank Special Envoy Sellassie for her briefing.

The Sahel region continues to face many complex and interconnected challenges in its political, humanitarian and security landscape. Concerning security, which is one of the three pillars of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, considerable challenges still remain. Terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram, are active in the region. These groups pose a grave threat to the peace and security of the region and beyond. Fighting them should remain a top priority for all Sahelian countries, and indeed for the international community.

In that regard, the States members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Republic of Benin are in the process of deploying a multinational joint task force with the aim of combating and ultimately booting out Boko Haram. The French Operation Barkhane has gone a long way towards complementing our efforts at combating terrorist networks in the Sahel and denying them safe havens in the region. A sustainable solution for countering terrorism in the region is of prime importance. We therefore call on the international community to continue to support initiatives that will put an end to terrorism in the Sahel.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons remains a core contributor to insecurity in the Sahel.

Criminal networks have taken advantage of the porous borders and large uninhabited spaces to traffick in arms. To address this, the Nigerian Government is actively engaged in cross-border intelligence sharing to monitor the flow of weapons within our region. Combating terrorists and criminal elements requires denying them access to the weapons that fuel their activities. We encourage genuine cooperation among States in the region and beyond in order to develop a permanent mechanism to address the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Sahel.

In terms of governance, which is the second pillar of the integrated strategy for the Sahel, it is essential that countries of the region address the roots and triggers of instability in order to minimize the potential for violent conflict and strengthen the institutional framework for peace, security and the rule of law. Exclusion and marginalization are among the root causes of conflict. In order to prevent conflict, therefore, political leaders should do more to promote inclusion and foster a sense of belonging among all groups and communities. Inclusiveness is an attribute of good governance, and where good governance prevails, the likelihood of conflict is reduced. This is a challenge that countries in the Sahel need to address in order to strengthen national cohesion and lay the foundations for peace, stability and progress.

In terms of resilience, the third pillar of the integrated strategy for the Sahel, the region is still faced with considerable challenges. The humanitarian situation in the Sahel remains fragile, with millions facing food insecurity, malnutrition and displacement. Addressing these challenges will require sustained engagement on the part of the international community. We commend the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other international humanitarian non-governmental organizations, such as the Red Cross, Oxfam and Médecins Sans Frontières, for the admirable work they are doing on the ground to bring relief to the millions of people in need of assistance.

While these efforts have helped to strengthen resilience among communities in the Sahel, much more needs to be done. We therefore urge the international community not to relent in support of efforts to address the humanitarian needs of the people in the Sahel.

**Mrs. Kawar** (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important meeting on peace and security in the Sahel region. I am also grateful to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel region for her tireless efforts in mobilizing support to implement the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, which has three main pillars requiring an integrated regional response to the various challenges facing the region.

The deteriorating political, economic and cultural situation in the Sahel have made it fertile ground for terrorism. The growth of terrorist activity in the Sahel by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Boko Haram, Ansar Eddine, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa and Al-Murabitun, as well as the spread of organized transnational crime and of arms and drugs have had a severe negative impact on the security of individuals and societies in West Africa. Economic vulnerability, extreme poverty and the lack of food security suffered by more than 20 million people in the area, as well as the impact of climate change and weak governance and institutions, are extremely complex, intertwined issues that are exacerbated by racial conflicts and regional tensions. The suffering is tragic, while the impact on democratic transitions and regional coherence has been dire.

Peace and security in the region can be established only through regional cooperation that paves the way for appropriate solutions to all the overlapping and intertwined problems in the region, particularly in northern Mali. A comprehensive political analysis of the Sahel would be the key to understanding the scope of the crisis in Mali and to facilitating its transition. On this basis, we must activate and operationalize preventive diplomacy and redouble our coordination efforts to promote dialogue and negotiations, while respecting the unique cultural and linguistic identities of the countries of the region. Marginalizing those elements would lead to increased conflict. Therefore, no long-term solution will emerge without consensual social participation.

In that regard, we reiterate the importance of the role of regional organizations in implementing measures aimed at achieving stability in the region, particularly by coordinating security between the countries of the region, supporting Government efforts to deal with structural challenges, and coming up with mechanisms for building institutional capacities

through an integrated vision, so as to operationalize the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and ensure its success in forming a regional system that can grapple with the challenges in the region and achieve peace and security there.

**Mr. Olguín Cigarroa** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We note with great interest the briefing by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, Ms. Guebre Sellassie, and reiterate our full support to her, as we did at the Council meeting on 19 June (see S/PV.7203).

We consider the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel very important, since it should focus not only on security but also on such vital elements as development and social inclusion. In our view it is fundamental to implement policies that can help the population of the Sahel emerge out of extreme poverty by creating sustainable employment and fair income distribution within the countries involved. We believe it is right to focus that African problems must be dealt with essentially by the countries of Africa. In that regard, we support and welcome the work of the Group of Five Sahel in strengthening cooperation on the integrated strategy, as well as the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the integrated strategy in the Sahel, chaired by Mali for the next two years, and the efforts, supported by Chile, to bring peace to northern Mali.

My delegation believes that particular attention should be paid to strengthening the rule of law and its institutions in the countries of the Sahel. A democratic system is the best way to achieve equitable economic development and ultimately peaceful co-existence. We would urge that over the next few months free and transparent elections be held in Burkina Faso leading to a transition to a civilian Government in November.

Chile has always considered the protection of civilians and the issue of internally displaced persons to be important aspects of the work of the Security Council. We are therefore concerned about the fact that, according to the most recent data in the Secretary-General's June report (S/2014/397), the number of internally displaced persons exceeds 3.3 million. In that regard, we would like to ask Ms. Sellassie, working with the relevant international organizations, to continue to focus on finding a solution to the problem.

The Sahel region is currently facing not only enormous social challenges but also those related to

terrorism, criminal activity and now Ebola. We firmly believe that the way for the region to make progress is by effectively implementing the United Nations integrated strategy under the leadership of the Special Envoy and other international institutions. For those efforts to succeed, they require cooperation and responsibility on the part of the national authorities in order to ensure sustainability, strengthened institutions and respect for human rights, and the definitive establishment of democracy.

**Mr. Iliichev** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Ms. Sellassie for her briefing, which reflects the evolution of the situation in the Sahel region in all its manifold aspects, as well as the main challenges and the steps being taken to implement the United Nations integrated strategy in the Sahel. The events in this turbulent area should be the focus of constant attention on the part of the international community.

The closely interrelated issues of improving the State administration system, finding effective responses to security problems, providing sustainable development and addressing humanitarian challenges require reliable collaborative efforts. In that regard, we believe that Ms. Sellassie's mandate should enable management of the strategy to be centralized in one place, or we will have to forget about the strategy's comprehensive nature. We cannot allow a practicable initiative to fall to pieces. Moreover, it would be a fundamental error to see the Sahara-Sahel region as a field where donors can compete for spheres of influence.

The leading role in implementing the strategy should belong to the States of the region themselves. The role of the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel is particularly important in that regard. We believe that regular meetings in its format will help achieve the desired goals and bring concrete results. Another important element, in our view, is the Group of Five Sahel, which is intended to be a kind of nucleus for promoting and achieving major initiatives. Integrational organizations, with the African Union at their head, also play an irreplaceable role. United Nations bodies, particularly their regional offices, also have important functions.

The whole complex of security threats in the region is a source of never-ending worry. The belt of instability it represents across the continent is merging with the highly turbulent Middle East region, and the

poorly controlled desert spaces of the Sahel serve as an excellent bridge for terrorists and criminal elements. The so-called Arab spring and outside military intervention in Libya have had extremely bad reverberations in the Sahara-Sahel. Mali found itself on the verge of collapse, and only very recently have some of the preconditions for normalizing the situation begun to emerge. The threat posed by Boko Haram continues its inexorable spread, producing a constant flow of fresh victims among civilians. Political instability and countless social ills are fueling negative trends and increasing radicalization among young people. It is therefore particularly important to respond swiftly and appropriately to dangerous incidents in the political arena, such as the recent events in Burkina Faso.

At the same time, we do not agree that interference is needed in the internal affairs of States in the region or their electoral processes on the pretext of preventing possible crises and on the basis of contrived, ambiguous and politically motivated concepts such as early indicators. We hope that consistent implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy, with the participation of interested partners, will contribute to overall improvement of the situation and raise the standard of living of the people in the region.

**Mrs. Perceval** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I would also like to welcome and thank Ms. Sellassie, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, for her briefing, which we have studied and carefully.

In our view, Mr. Prodi's outline of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, which covers security, governance, development, human rights and humanitarian issues, represented a significant step towards achieving an essential integrated approach to the Sahel. When I talk about an integrated approach, I also mean a sincere approach to the issue of the Sahel, because it is that kind of approach that makes it possible to aspire to greater effectiveness and coherence in the context of a multitude of national, regional and international programmes. That coherence and coordination — which the Special Envoy has defined as one of her goals — are indispensable, urgent and essential if we are to continue to maintain full attention on the Sahel region. Without such an integrated approach and coordinated action among the multiple players at various levels, it seems to us that we could risk getting lost in the individual characteristics

of the various conflicts that ensnare the countries in the region.

For example, the legitimate fight against terrorism is essential. The primary cause will be illuminated in the project. Humanitarian issues might be another priority area. That is why we believe that it is essential to understand that working on isolated aspects is ineffective. We support the integrated approach by which various areas — humanitarian efforts, promoting and protecting human rights, eradicating cross-border crime, fighting against and eradicating terrorism, eradication of poverty — are all addressed together. I believe that is the most concrete step we can and should take.

With that in mind, Argentina endorses the congratulations addressed to the countries of the Sahel region that have clearly taken this necessity on board, as shown by the third meeting of the ministerial coordination platform for the Sahel, held last month in Bamako. We welcome the specific steps taken at the meeting to strengthen coordination, adopting the terms of reference for the platform and the thematic groups that have been established. We also welcome greater coordination among the platform and the Group of Five Sahel.

With respect to the individual issues examined on 18 November, I wish to briefly say that Argentina agrees with the conclusions of the platform regarding its concerns and condemns the many attacks on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. We therefore call on the parties to make progress in the talks in Algeria, whose work with the members of the mediation team we deeply value.

We also agree with the assessment of the grave situation in Libya and the support expressed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for that country. That situation reminds us of the need to respond to the structural causes of conflicts. Absent that, the various illegal networks and the threat posed by various extremist and terrorist groups operating in the region will continue to spread. It is also true that they will continue to spread if we continue with business as usual. It is not written in stone that the Sahel, more than any other region in the world, is condemned to be packed with weapons, perpetrators of violence and extremist and terrorist groups. The actions of the countries of the region and of the international community will determine whether the

situation worsens or is transformed in the certain need for development.

In that sense the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel is essential in reminding us that a response focused on security alone is insufficient. There must be a parallel concentration on development and a dignified life, particularly in a region — as noted many times — with one of the lowest human development indexes in the world. In our view, not only in the Sahel but in various parts of the world, ensuring security as the axis of the rule of law and development has not led to progress. We have seen the failures. Poverty cannot be eradicated on the basis of solutions from countries that have focused only on security. That approach only punishes the poor; it does not eliminate poverty.

In that respect, as it is my delegation's last meeting with Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, I would like to reiterate two items of importance to my country.

First, I recall that the primary responsibility for peace and security and development in the countries of the Sahel is that of the countries of the region themselves. It is they who must address the deep structural roots of their problems and conflicts and strengthen agreements and strategies to implement programmes and policies through short-, medium- and long-term plans to resolve those structural problems and conflicts. However, Argentina very much believes in the importance of the support that the international community and the United Nations should provide, especially taking into account the challenges due to climate change and the economic and financial crisis that originated in the wealthiest countries of the world. Their effects are also impacting on the Sahel region.

Secondly, I wish to stress that many of the problems are, in our opinion, consequences of structural causes that must be met with substantive information and not palliative measures. We cannot just point a finger and say that countries of the region need to strengthen the rule of law and decide to move towards sustainable human development. I believe we must also look at each other, as the international community, and ask ourselves whether we might also contribute to sustainable human development in the Sahel by changing the disciplines and structure of the functioning of the global economic system, so that the economic and financial instruments might serve sustainable human development, rather than generate, again and again, injustice and inequality.

Today's meeting has meaning only insofar as it supports the efforts of the countries of the region and keeps the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel on the Council's agenda. However, in considering ways to achieve a more substantive and enriching discussion, Argentina considers it would be useful to be able to rely on concrete measures to assess implementation. We therefore invite the Council to consider how to ensure that the follow-up to the issue will be more effective.

I recall that at the Council's most recent meeting (see S/PV.7203) we said it would be important, for example, to have detailed information of the disbursements of the \$1.5 billion that was promised for new investments in the region by the World Bank Group. We also suggested, with regard to all the programmes and approaches to be presented in the reports, requiring objective data on the accounting of all funds assigned to each of the strategic goals and implemented programmes, as well as assessments of the impacts. No one is against follow-up mechanisms. Everybody recognizes that they are necessary. To us they seem essential to be able to maintain the dynamic that has kept attention focused on the Sahel since 2013, and to continue making it visible within the complex reality of the region.

The human rights of women, children, girls and boys cannot be guaranteed by minimal or scattered efforts. We should work through integrated action and strategic coordination to ensure that women, children, the youth — everyone, as Amartya Sen said — can live without fear, hunger or discrimination. We are confident that appropriate implementation of the integrated strategy will enable significant progress in solving the structural causes of conflict. That is why ensuring its implementation is the best and most sincere response we can provide to ensure peace and security in the Sahel.

**Mr. Liu Jieyi (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates the convening of today's meeting. We also thank Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, for her briefing.

At present, the situation in the Sahel region is generally stable, with continuing economic growth and steady progress in the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

On the other hand, there are also multiple challenges in the Sahel region, such as the fragile security situation, development imbalances, the spread of terrorism and

the ever more serious threat of transnational organized crime. The Sahel covers a broad area, with interrelated traditional and non-traditional conflicts. China believes that the issues in the Sahel region must be tackled comprehensively at three levels: the national, regional and international.

First, we should focus on the settlement of regional hot-spot issues. At present, the political and security situation in Libya is deteriorating. The national reconciliation process in Mali is on a difficult and treacherous road. The political transition in Burkina Faso is also fragile. The international community should therefore take targeted measures on the basis of respect for the sovereignty of the countries concerned so as to help the countries of the region to push forward political processes aimed at improving the security situation and promoting national reconciliation, with a view to de-escalating tension in hotspot situations and seeking lasting solutions.

Secondly, proactive support should be provided to regional and subregional organizations in their efforts to maintain regional peace and stability. China appreciates the successful mediation efforts of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States on the issues of Mali and Burkina Faso and supports the African approach of the resolution of African issues by the Africans themselves.

We welcome the development of collective security mechanisms by regional organizations such as the African Union and support the planning and establishment of the rapid-reaction force for the crisis in Africa. African regional organizations enjoy unique advantages in resolving African issues and as such deserve the support of the international community.

Thirdly, coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and the international financial institutions should be strengthened. The lack of development and development imbalances figure among the root causes of the conflict in the region. In the past year, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, together with the heads of the World Bank and other international financial institutions, have visited the Sahel and raised a large amount of resources for the countries in the region, thus making important contributions to their national development and poverty-reduction processes.

At the same time, a new model was launched involving tripartite cooperation among the United Nations, international financial institutions and regional

organizations, in a concerted effort to settle regional hot-spot issues. Thereafter, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, together with the President of the World Bank, also visited the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa, with positive results. We hope that the United Nations will continue with such visits and draw lessons from successful experiences, so as to further promote the economic and social development of the countries in the region.

The Government of China attaches great importance to our relations with Africa. Through bilateral channels, it has made its utmost effort to provide assistance to the countries concerned in the Sahel region. China also proactively supports United Nations peacekeeping operations in countries such as Mali. We are also exploring with the African Union ways of providing support to the rapid-reaction force for the African crisis.

China is ready to continue to make contributions, together with the rest of the international community, to promoting the settlement of hot-spot issues in the Sahel region and help the countries in the region to achieve at the soonest long-term peace and stability and security.

**Mr. Nibishaka** (Rwanda): Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for having convened this important briefing. I should also like to extend my appreciation to Special Envoy Sellassie for her update on the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

The Sahel region continues to face considerable challenges, with terrorism and extremism gaining momentum in the region as a result of porous borders and weak institutions. We are particularly concerned at the alarming situation in the north of Mali and at reports of the pledge of support to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant from Boko Haram Nigeria, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis in Egypt and Ansar al-Sharia in Libya, worrying developments that could further threaten the stability of the entire region.

The political and security instability of some of the countries in the region such as in Libya, which has become a safe haven for numerous armed and terrorist groups and is on the brink of an all-out civil war, could further impede real progress in the region. The high level of youth unemployment, the chronic humanitarian situation and the impact of the recent Ebola outbreak in the region are cross-cutting challenges that need to be addressed through a comprehensive and holistic approach.

The task of addressing these interlinked challenges is daunting but not impossible. We already have a clearly defined approach through the United Nations strategy for the Sahel, which encompasses governance, security and an integrative development mechanism. The real challenge remains the implementation of that strategy and for it to produce tangible results.

To achieve that, the implementation of the Sahel strategy must be owned by the countries of the region, with the strong support of the international community. We commend in that regard the joint visit last year of the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union, the Presidents of the World Bank and of the African Development Bank, as well as the European Union. In addition, there is a need to, first, enhance coordination and synergy between key regional and multilateral partners so as to maximize effectiveness and avoid duplication; secondly, to ensure the rapid disbursement of pledges, which is critical in addressing the interlinked challenges in the region, particularly in building self-resilience and ownership; thirdly, to promote cross-border cooperation between the Sahel, the Maghreb and the West Africa and central African regions in the fight against the spread of terrorism; and, fourthly, building respective national security capacities as well as supporting the efforts of the African Union in establishing and operationalizing the African Standby Force.

As the time frame for the implementation plan of the strategy is set to end by 2016, we would like to recommend a review of the strategy and its readjustment in accordance with developments on the ground.

In conclusion, Rwanda remains committed to continuing to provide full support to the United Nations strategy with a view to bringing about long-term peace and stability in the Sahel region.

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel for her briefing and to reiterate France's full support for her mission.

The stabilization of Mali is of crucial importance for the Sahel. After having mobilized the attention and energy of the Security Council for two years, Mali is now entering a period that could be historic. The peace negotiations under way in Algiers are bringing together the Malian parties for the first time under the auspices of the international community as a whole. In that regard, I should like to welcome the investment

of all international partners in these negotiations, in particular Algeria and the United Nations.

An inclusive and truly applied peace agreement in Mali would have beneficial consequences for the entire Sahel region and beyond, and there would be a clear improvement of security in the region. At this crucial time, the United Nations and, more broadly, the international community as a whole have a major responsibility to fulfil. We must continue to encourage the parties in Mali to negotiate in a spirit of compromise in order to conclude a lasting and inclusive peace agreement.

France is very committed to helping the countries of the Sahel to meet the challenges they face. In addition to its involvement in the European Union and the United Nations, in 2013, France revised the Sahel-Saharan strategy it had launched in its national capacity in 2008. Our strategy is to develop a comprehensive approach combining issues security, governance and development. The French Sahelo-Saharan strategy covers the cooperation of France with six countries — Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, the Niger and Chad.

The strategy focuses in particular on the following four priorities: first, to contributing to improving the living conditions of the population, through, inter alia, access to basic services, opening up remote areas, expanding the State's territorial network and sustainable economic development; secondly, strengthening the capacity of States to give them the means to fight against terrorism and large-scale trafficking; thirdly, fighting against radicalization by supporting the development of education and the media; and fourthly, encouraging and facilitating regional security cooperation. The French Sahelo-Saharan strategy represents more than €400 million — \$500 million — in bilateral development assistance each year. As part of this strategy, France makes 160 technical and security experts available to these countries.

The French military Operation Barkhane represents the contribution of France to the fight against terrorism and to the improvement of security in the Sahel. Operation Barkhane was launched on 1 August 2014 at the request of five countries of the Sahel and in close collaboration with them. It mobilizes more than 3,000 soldiers, substantial air assets and hundreds of vehicles. Operation Barkhane's efforts are regional in scope in order to deal with the movement of terrorist groups in

the Sahel. It has two objectives: first, to fight against the terrorist threat at the regional level — last night, during an operation near Gao, French forces killed one of key terrorist leaders in the Sahel, the former military chief of the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, who was personally responsible for several murders and takings of hostages; and secondly, helping to build the security capacity of the Sahel States.

The United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel should help all stakeholders to coordinate their efforts for the Sahel. The variety of initiatives over the Sahel — from the United Nations, the European Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the World Bank, the African Union — is the sign of a strong mobilization of the international community. I welcome in this regard the creation of the Group of Five Sahel, which aims to coordinate the efforts of the key countries concerned.

To be effective, it is important that these strategies be coordinated. In that context, the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel, implemented at the time of the Secretary-General's visit to the Sahel in November 2013, is a unique framework, which, now chaired by Mali, is the only forum that brings together all the States of West and North Africa, as well as concerned international and regional organizations. I welcome the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General's efforts to bring about convergence of the regional and international efforts for the Sahel. I particularly welcome the strengthening of cooperation between Ministerial Coordination Platform and the Group of Five Sahel countries.

The United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel should result in concrete projects in all areas. In the area of governance, a significant number of elections in the Sahel and West Africa will be held next year. The United Nations objective will be to assist States that seek such support in organizing the elections in a transparent and credible manner.

On the occasion of the fifteenth Francophonie summit, held on 29 and 30 November in Dakar, President François Hollande praised the courage that the people of Burkina Faso have demonstrated in recent weeks. Their example shows that it is the people who must decide their futures. We hope that the Burkina Faso people will now master this transition process and ensure that reconciliation is achieved and that free and fair elections will be held within a year.

Next, in the area of security, the Secretary-General recalled that the terrorist attacks in the Maghreb and the Sahel increased from 60 per cent in 2013 compared to 2012. The United Nations has as its mission to assist States in the region and African organizations to strengthen their cooperation in the fight against terrorism. We support the operationalization of these initiatives in the context of African architecture of peace and security.

Finally, in the humanitarian and development field, in 2014, it is estimated that there are more than 20 million people suffering from food insecurity in the region. Five million children are threatened by a risk of serious malnutrition. The development of desert areas should be a major focus of the efforts of the international community. In each of these areas, Mr. President, you can count on France's strong commitment.

**Mrs. Jakubonė** (Lithuania): I thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, for her briefing on the progress towards implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. I also wish to commend the United Nations Office for West Africa for its dedicated efforts in the region.

It is encouraging that the United Nations, as well as the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), has developed integrated strategies addressing the multiple challenges of the Sahel. These strategies must be operationalized in a coordinated manner to ensure the most effective impact on the security, governance and resilience of countries in the Sahel region. Strengthening coordination and increasing collaboration with and among the countries of the region as well as among different stakeholders remains key. The third meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Platform, held on 18 November in Bamako, was another positive step in that regard.

For its part, the European Union (EU) is actively engaging in the Sahel and, in view of the significant developments in recent months, is updating its strategic approach. Considerable EU efforts are focused on strengthening security sector reform, via, namely, the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) to contribute to the training of the Malian Armed Forces, and the civilian missions — the EU Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP) Sahel in the Niger and the recently

deployed EUCAP Sahel in Mali. As part of the EUTM, my country continues to contribute to these efforts.

Since last June, when Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Sellassie first briefed the Council (S/PV.7203), we have witnessed further deterioration of the political, security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel region. Humanitarian and development challenges, as well as adverse effects of climate change and the threat of an Ebola outbreak, pose significant threats. Over 24 million people face food insecurity, 6 million children are malnourished and at least 3.3 million are displaced. The unemployment rates are high and people, especially youth, are at risk of being recruited by terrorist groups. The circulation of and much too easy access to illicit arms compounds continuing violence, disrupting and damaging civilian lives and fuelling human rights violations.

The scourge of terrorism remains a major threat across the Sahel. Weak governance, porous borders, cross-border organized crime and the spread of terrorist groups, notably Boko Haram, are the very acute challenges that could further destabilize the situation in the region. The recent attacks at Kano Central Mosque in Nigeria left scores of innocent civilians dead or injured. During the past months, terrorist attacks throughout northern Mali have also claimed lives, including those of United Nations peacekeepers. As activities of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and other Sahel terrorist groups are increasingly financed by drug dealing and smuggling, the nexus of drug trafficking and terrorism in the Sahel is an increasingly disturbing trend.

The foregoing are huge challenges for the region, requiring complex, well-coordinated responses and consistent engagement of regional and subregional organizations, the United Nations and the international community at large. In particular, further enhancement of cooperation and coordination of intelligence and information sharing, reinforcement of existing mechanisms, in particular the Sahel Fusion and Liaison Unit, and regular meetings of the heads of intelligence and security services in the countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region play a key role in stepping up efforts to counter the spread of the threat of terrorism.

It is essential that the United Nations counter-terrorism machinery, in combination with the efforts of other relevant international organizations, continue its focused and needs-based assistance to countries in the



region. It is also important that the countries of the Sahel region increase their individual and collective efforts against cross-border security threats, including by strengthening border controls and curbing the flows of arms, as well as the movement of illegal armed groups, across the region. We welcome the commitment of the African Union and regional partners to strengthening relevant mechanisms, including the Nouakchott Process on security cooperation across the Sahel and the efforts of the Group of Five Sahel.

The crisis in Mali affects the whole Sahel and can be resolved only through a comprehensive, inclusive and transparent peace process. It is regrettable that the ongoing negotiations in Algiers have not yet concluded in a sustainable peace agreement. Further delay of such an agreement will only exacerbate the security situation in northern Mali and, eventually, the region. The United Nations, regional mediators and the international community should send a strong message of expectation that the Algiers process should lead to durable peace, within the agreed parameters and with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Mali.

As the situation in Libya remains dire, enhanced efforts should be focused on finding a political solution, bringing all parties to the negotiation table and putting an end to the bloodshed and division in the country. Absent the progress on the political and security tracks, Libya risks becoming just another hotbed of radical extremism and terrorism, with most serious consequences for the entire region.

My delegation commends the joint efforts of the United Nations, the AU and ECOWAS in Burkina Faso, which led to the signing of a charter for the transition and appointment of the civilian President of the Transition in Burkina Faso. We will remain vigilant on the political situation in the country and on the transition leading to the elections in November 2014.

An implementation plan of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel with a focus on governance, security and resilience has been developed. It is now essential to ensure its swift implementation through coherent and systematic activities on the ground and the delivery of tangible results that ensure the genuine sustainable development of the region and benefit all its people.

**Mr. Oh Joon** (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank Ms. Hiroute Sellassie, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, for her briefing.

Since the joint high-level visit to the Sahel region, led by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in November last year, the international community has scaled up the political commitments and resources to respond to a multitude of threats across the Sahel. The countries of the Sahel and their partners have also pursued closer cooperation and coordination. However, the Sahel region continues to face persistent challenges in the security, political and humanitarian sectors. Porous borders and political instability facilitate transnational organized crime, such as the flow of illicit arms and drug trafficking, often providing a safe haven for terrorist groups. In this regard, we believe the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel is instrumental in tackling the multifaceted challenges.

I would like to make a few observations regarding the implementation of the strategy. First, with regard to security, building security capabilities and strengthening regional security cooperation is essential. Increased threats across the Sahel, such as those coming from the precarious situation in northern Mali and the impact of Boko Haram on the whole region, are all aggravating the vulnerability of the Sahel region. More effective border controls, as well as counter-terrorism cooperation, are necessary to meet such challenges. In this vein, we take note of the recent joint efforts undertaken by Nigeria and its neighbouring countries, Benin, Cameroon, Chad and the Niger through the framework of the Lake Chad Basin Commission. We also recognize the meeting on the issue of Boko Haram held in Abuja last September. We support more effective security cooperation, including information-sharing and joint patrols among the countries in the region.

Secondly, with regard to resilience, in order to ensure lasting peace and stability in the region it is imperative to tackle the chronic problems, such as widespread environmental degradation, food insecurity and the lack of opportunities for the youth. We are especially concerned about growing displacement caused by extremists, as demonstrated by more than 1.5 million people fleeing Boko Haram. In the Sahel, millions of people remain at risk of food insecurity, including children suffering from acute malnutrition. Long-term and sustained solutions to this humanitarian crisis must be solved to address the root cause of the instability in the region.

Lastly, coherence and coordination should be improved for the various initiatives in the Sahel. Avoiding overlap and prioritizing resources is important to ensure assistance for the Sahel in the most efficient and effective way. We note the efforts of the Group of Five Sahel to ensure coordination with the United Nations, including the holding of the ministerial coordination platform meeting in Bamako last month. We look forward to continued coordination through the central role of that platform.

The international community should maintain its commitment to advancing governance, improving security and carrying out long-term plans for resilience in the Sahel region. The Republic of Korea will continue to support these efforts for peace and development in the region.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

I too thank Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, for her briefing, and I congratulate her on her leadership.

Faced with the situation in the Sahel region, characterized by multifaceted challenges, the international community must waste no time in taking action. Following the high-level visit of the Secretary-General to the Sahel region in 2013, significant resources have been mobilized in order to promote projects for peace, stability and development. In this regard, we welcome the \$8.25 billion mobilized for projects to stimulate growth and eliminate poverty, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/542) of 24 July on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We underscore the fact that underdevelopment, in particular youth unemployment, establishes a link between terrorism and criminality, and we reiterate that peace, stability, security and development go hand in hand.

Chad takes note of the conclusion of the third meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the integrated strategy for the Sahel, which was held in Bamako on 18 November.

Chad firmly condemns terrorist acts, specifically those against the soldiers and facilities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. We are counting on the Malian authorities to carry out investigations and bring the

perpetrators of those terrorist acts to justice. We encourage the Special Envoy to continue to emphasize the coordination of various initiatives for the Sahel and to lend an attentive ear to the priorities of the countries in the region, in particular the Group of Five Sahel.

We remain confident that the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, which has inspired so much hope, will soon bring the benefits of socioeconomic development, governance and security to the countries of the region. The Security Council urgently needs to give priority to regulating conflicts in the region, in particular in Libya and northern Mali.

Moreover, it is also important to address the acts of the Boko Haram terrorist group, which pose a grave menace to peace and security in the Sahel as well as in West and Central Africa. In that regard, we call for a multifaceted platform of support, such as the Nouakchott process, the Group of Five Sahel and the Multinational Joint Task Force of the Lake Chad Basin Commission. The security of the countries in the region lies in the strengthening of cooperation and coordination to combat terrorism and transnational criminality. It is in those countries that peace and security, the key to development, will need to be established.

Finally, in accordance with the presidential statement S/PRST/2014/17, of 27 August 2014, addressed to the Secretariat, we request that the information exchanges be strengthened with the countries of the region through their representatives in New York in order to better ensure monitoring of the strategy's implementation.

As other delegations have done, I would like to ask a question of the Special Envoy. Given the increasingly worrisome deterioration in the security situation, how can the strategy help to operationalize the initiatives I have mentioned in order to strengthen cooperation and coordination in the security sector among the States of the region?

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Ms. Sellassie to respond to the comments and questions of delegations.

**Ms. Sellassie:** On the first question — whether partners working in the Sahel have managed to break down institutional barriers and are working together—in my briefing today I highlighted a few examples of joint programming and partnership in the Sahel: the partnership

between the World Bank and the United Nations, the partnership between the United Nations and the European Union and the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union. Of course, as we strengthen our coordination mechanism, as was the case in November during the last meeting of the Ministerial Coordinating Platform, we hope that it will yield more partnerships among the partners.

On the question on how the mandate of my Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel is demarcated from that of United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), my Office has been mandated to facilitate the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, which is a tool put in place to address the root, structural and systemic causes of instability in the Sahel. That is expected to be done through regional analysis and programming. I coordinate the efforts of the whole United Nations family in the Sahel. UNOWA is the United Nations response to crisis and to preventive diplomacy. We in my Office have been tasked to address root causes through medium- and long-term programming. The geographical area is also slightly different: the Sahel includes part of West Africa, but it goes beyond that region. I have just given Council members a few highlights of the different roles we have.

*(spoke in French)*

On the question as to what extent bringing together the Ministerial Coordination Platform and the Group of Five Sahel could help face the challenges in the Sahel, during the second meeting of the Platform, Mali was asked by the participants to engage the members of the Group of Five Sahel and to invite them to the third meeting. The reason was because they needed greater clarity on the role of those two mechanisms. It is now clear to everyone, especially following the third meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Platform, held in Bamako last month, which included the participation of the interim Permanent Secretary of the Group of Five Sahel, that the role of the Group is in fact an initiative of the five priority countries of the region. It is an initiative for national ownership of their future, and also a mechanism for cooperation to assess and develop common programmes. The roles are therefore clear. The Coordination Platform coordinates the efforts of

all partners and brings together partners and countries of the region, not just countries of the Sahel but of the Maghreb as well as some countries of Central Africa and West Africa. That coming together, along with the fact that Group of Five Sahel is now a member of the Platform, has served to clarify the roles. I think the clarification of roles will facilitate work on the ground.

*(spoke in English)*

On the last question — how my Office can enhance regional cooperation given the deteriorating security situation — that is in fact the purpose of my Office. As members have seen, what we have been attempting to do since the beginning is to enhance coordination among partners and between countries of the region. That will be a tactic that we will pursue in the coming months. But it also our duty to highlight to all concerned that a situation that is not given enough attention, like the one in Libya or the regionalization of the Boko Haram phenomenon, has an impacting on the Sahel. I therefore think that advocacy and programming will help to operationalize regional cooperation in the Sahel.

**The President** *(spoke in French)*: I thank Ms. Sellassie for her clarifications to the questions posed.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Chad.

My question was not just limited to cooperation. When I asked how the strategy for the Sahel could coordinate all the different initiatives, I had in mind the Nouakchott process, the Group of Five Sahel, the Coordination Platform and, in particular, the Multinational Joint Task Force for the Lake Chad Basin. All those endeavours converge in a single goal, which is to combat terrorism and reduce insecurity. I simply wanted to know whether the Special Envoy had an approach to bring all those efforts together and to channel energies. I do not mean for her to respond to me now, in public. I hope we can continue our conversation after the meeting.

I once again resume my functions as President of the Council.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at noon.*