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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Djani	(Indonesia)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Germany	Mr. Schulz
	Kuwait	Mr. Albanai
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	South Africa	Mr. Matjila
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (S/2019/371)

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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

Report of the Secretary-General on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (S/2019/371)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Burkina Faso to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Security Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Alpha Barry, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Burkina Faso.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Department of Peace Operations; Mr. Pierre Buyoya, African Union High Representative for Mali and the Sahel; Mr. Angel Losada Fernández, European Union Special Representative for the Sahel; and Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Mr. Buyoya, Mr. Losada Fernández and Mr. Fedotov are joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Bamako, Luxembourg and Vienna, respectively.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/371, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

I now give the floor to Ms. Keita.

Ms. Keita (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address the Council today in the presence of His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso; the African Union High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, President Buyoya; and the European Union Special Representative for the Sahel, Mr. Angel Losada Fernández, to provide an update on the standing-up of the Joint Force of the

Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel); the international support provided in that regard, including by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA); and the difficulties faced and possible measures that could be taken in the future, as requested by resolution 2391 (2017).

The situation in Mali and the Sahel in the broad sense remains extremely worrisome. The region faces serious problems, ranging from climate change and drought to growing insecurity, violent extremism, the illicit trafficking in persons, weapons and drugs. As always, it is the civilian population that pays the highest price. Terrorist groups continue to evolve and to spread beyond borders, including in Burkina Faso, the Niger, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo. The humanitarian crisis in the Sahel is deteriorating, with an unprecedented number of schools and health centres that have been closed owing to insecurity. Countless farmers have missed yet another planting season in the Niger delta. As a result, more and more people will now depend on cereals and other food products provided by the international community. That is compounded by poor governance and a lack of resources and employment opportunities for young people, which create a breeding ground for violent extremism.

The major cross-border initiatives taken by the region's political leaders to jointly develop solutions to that security situation demonstrate their willingness to unite and address the many threats facing their region. In the same spirit, the G-5 Sahel has taken additional measures to operationalize the Joint Force after the devastating terrorist attack on its headquarters last June. I am particularly encouraged by the resumption of the Joint Force's operations in January this year. To date, it has carried out four operations in the three sectors since the beginning of the year. That is a truly encouraging development and I commend the Force Commander, Brigadier General Hanena Ould Sidi, for his leadership and all the units of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force for their commitment and sacrifices in the service of this important cause.

It is now essential to maintain that momentum. I have urged the G-5 Sahel member States to urgently accelerate the full operationalization of the Joint Force so that it can finally reach its full operational capacity. Effective operations will send a strong signal to terrorist groups that their encroachment on the lives of the population will no longer be tolerated and will

be rejected through the collective determination of the Member States in the region.

Many security operations are currently under way in the Sahel, often simultaneously. They are being conducted by the armed forces of the G-5 Sahel countries, either alone or bilaterally, jointly with international forces or as part of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. In the future, in order to strengthen command and control and ensure ownership, it will be important to clarify the framework within which the various operations of the G-5 Sahel member States are conducted. In that connection, I call on the leaders of the Joint Force, in close collaboration with the Governments of the G-5 Sahel countries, to further clarify the strategic concept of operations of the Joint Force. I also encourage them to accelerate the planning process and to develop a clear strategic plan for the months and years ahead. That will also facilitate international support.

The establishment of the human rights compliance framework is another encouraging development. The few cases of alleged violations that have already been committed by the Force are detrimental to the achievement of its military objectives. However, they also demonstrate the need for such a framework and for a collective effort of the national armies of the G-5 Sahel member countries, as well as the Joint Force itself, to actively contribute to its implementation.

Over the past 12 months, the Joint Force has significantly stepped up its efforts to combat such behaviour. That cooperation should continue to be strengthened so that the Joint Force can achieve its goals in terms of security and protecting the population. I welcome the initiative taken by the European Union to play a key role in organizing and coordinating international support for the establishment of the police component of the Joint Force. Ensuring compliance with legal norms, including with regard to detention, will help to strengthen trust and relationships with local communities. It is also an essential element in establishing the rule of law in the region.

(spoke in English)

The United Nations continues to provide international operational and logistical support to the Joint Force. I commend MINUSMA for its efforts undertaken in support of the Joint Force so far and its swift action and flexibility in responding to requests for support. However, the Mission's support to the Joint Force has been limited by a number of factors, including

the hiatus in the Joint Force's operations until January, but also certain limitations imposed by resolution 2391 (2017). In particular, geographical restrictions imposed on MINUSMA's support have prevented the five other battalions of the Joint Force that operate outside of Mali from benefiting from life-support consumables. That has proved to be one of the obstacles to the full operationalization of the Joint Force.

As such, I reiterate the Secretary-General's call for the lifting of the geographical restrictions on MINUSMA's support. I also reiterate his call for a caveat; obviously, MINUSMA's main focus should and will remain support to the peace process in Mali and, as such, support to the Joint Force should not add any additional strain on the Mission's resources or supply chains. Consequently, the geographical limitations on MINUSMA's support to the Joint Force should be removed only for the provision of life-support consumables and only as long as the Joint Force or a third party can guarantee the pick-up and transport of rations, fuel and water procured by MINUSMA.

That proposal notwithstanding, it is evident that in the long run a different support model for the Joint Force needs to be envisaged. I call on the members of the Security Council to consider other options that will allow for more predictable financial support and facilitate more effective long-term planning.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the European Union for its extensive and consistent support for the Joint Force and for managing the coordination hub. I also welcome the decision to move parts of the coordination hub to the Sahel region to enhance visibility and ownership by the G-5 Sahel as soon as all the necessary requirements are in place.

I thank all donors that have so generously come forward in support of the Joint Force, and I urge those that have made pledges but not disbursed them yet to follow through without delay. Every contribution makes a difference, and the predictability of financial flows will greatly enhance the Joint Force's planning capacity.

In concluding, let me say that even once fully operational, the Joint Force cannot shoulder the burden of fighting terrorism and stabilizing the region on its own. A security-driven approach alone will not be sufficient to combat violence in the region in a sustainable manner. It must go hand in hand with our collective and coordinated efforts and a broader strategy encompassing poverty reduction, good governance,

development and humanitarian assistance, and security interventions. The United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel remains a valid framework for such coordinated action, and I call on partners to support its operationalization, in particular for climate adaptation, the empowerment of women and youth, and cross-border initiatives for peace. I also call on the G-5 Sahel member States to implement their priority investment plan without further delay.

The African Union can play an important role in providing an umbrella for the various security initiatives in the region, and I welcome the recent resumption of the Nouakchott process.

Finally, the time for action is now. We all have a shared responsibility for the Sahel, and we must each deliver on our part of the promise to help provide much-needed relief and empowerment to the populations across the Sahel that need it most.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Barry (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset, Mr. President, to congratulate you, on behalf of all of my colleagues from the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month and for having convened this important meeting devoted to considering the report of the Secretary-General on the G-5 Sahel Joint Force (S/2019/371). I take this opportunity to congratulate Germany on its presidency in April and France on its presidency in March, the month when the Security Council visited Burkina Faso and Mali.

Following the report that the Assistant Secretary-General has just presented to us, I would like, on behalf of all of my colleagues from the G-5 Sahel, to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, on the high quality of his report. The relevant recommendations therein are evidence, as if such evidence were still necessary, of his backing for and determination to find ways and means of setting up a support mechanism for the Joint Force.

For two years now, the Heads of State of the G-5 Sahel, based on their deep wisdom and sense of realism, have deemed it necessary to equip themselves with a force that can counter the attempts made by armed terrorist groups to destabilize our States. The Council has understood this and lent its support owing to its

conviction that the threat of destabilization looming over the G-5 Sahel is a serious one and poses a genuine threat to international peace and security.

We note with satisfaction that in the two years of existence of the Joint Force, although it is still a long way from having reached its full operational capacity, some progress has been made. The Joint Force is now in existence and is 90 percent operational in Sector West, in terms of the battalion component; 74 per cent in Central Sector; and 75 per cent in Sector East. It has gone from the concept phase to the implementation phase and has a number of major operations under its belt. Since the beginning of 2019, the Force has already carried out seven operations, two in Sector East, three in Central Sector and two in Sector West. The technical cooperation agreement between the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the Joint Force has allowed the Force to successfully carry out Operation Sanparga, parts I and II, in Central Sector since January 2019.

Through these operations, the G-5 Sahel Joint Force has created an optimal operational cycle aimed at setting in motion a dynamic that can neutralize terrorist and criminal groups of all stripes. Of course, these actions are undertaken with full respect for the compliance framework through mechanisms aimed at safeguarding respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

Here I wish to commend the active solidarity expressed by the Security Council with regard to the G-5 Sahel countries, notably through the adoption of resolution 2359 (2017), which authorized the deployment of the Joint Force, and of resolution 2391 (2017), calling for the conclusion of a technical agreement between the United Nations, the European Union and the G-5 Sahel States, with a view to providing specific support to the Joint Force in its operations on the territory of Mali.

Despite this encouraging progress, the situation remains worrisome and continues to deteriorate. Even as we speak, the Sahel is still experiencing the shockwaves from the attack perpetrated this past Sunday against a church in north-central Burkina Faso, which caused six deaths, including that of the priest conducting mass. The latter was specifically targeted and gunned down in cold blood by a group of terrorist attackers who had entered the village. Yesterday we learned of the attack against a column of the Nigerian army that killed 28 people. Exactly two weeks previously, a Protestant

church in the north of Burkina Faso was attacked, taking the same grim death toll of six lives, including that of the pastor of the church. During the night of 13 to 14 May, an imam and his son were killed in cold blood. In between these killings, we saw the abduction of French tourists in Benin. Although Benin is not in the Sahel, the destination of the abductors and their hostages, before they were stopped by a coordinated military intervention between French forces and those of Burkina Faso, makes clear that this is the work of the same terrorist groups that are breaching the peace in the Sahel. There have also been numerous other attacks in Mali, in the Niger and other countries — proof of the persistent terrorist threat in the Sahel.

Just the day before yesterday, on 14 May, the Nigerian army, as I mentioned earlier, once again faced a large-scale attack resulting in the deaths of 28 military personnel on the border with Mali. Likewise, 12 Fulani civilians were killed Monday in the Segou region, in central Mali. Terrorist groups financed by artisanal gold mines or various forms of trafficking remain strong and are exerting great pressure upon our States. The threat is gaining traction everywhere. It is no longer contained within the north of Mali, in Sahelian Burkina Faso, or far from the borders of Mauritania; it is spreading and taking other forms whose consequences are equally tragic.

The Sahel today is seeing dozens of victims every month, killed in ambushes, abductions, targeted or mass killings, or attacks using improvised explosive devices. Community conflicts and killings are the primary consequence of that situation. The worst extremes of horror have been surpassed by the community killings in Inates, in the Niger; Yirgou and Arbinda, in Burkina Faso; and Koulognon and Ogossagou, in Mali. Since the beginning of 2019, at least 300 people have died as a result of community conflicts alone.

The Sahel today is also seeing attacks on schools in the form of arson, the looting of buildings and threats against teachers. We are seeing attacks on State symbols, looting of markets and cattle theft, and on top of that the killing of teachers. As a result, public administrations, health clinics and schools have been closed, depriving thousands of children of education and causing massive population and refugee displacements.

In Mali and Burkina Faso combined, more than half a million children are now without schooling, while about 150,000 people have been internally displaced in

Burkina Faso and 600,000 in Chad. Along the borders, thousands of refugees have joined the tens of thousands of Malian refugees who have fled to Burkina Faso and Mauritania since 2012.

As we can see, the Sahel countries are facing a humanitarian situation that is spiralling out of control. I would like to thank all our partners who are helping us to cope with the humanitarian emergency, starting with the United Nations. Given the magnitude of the crisis, however, we need assistance on a much larger scale.

In addition to the humanitarian emergency, it appears that the security challenge will also remain a major emergency for a long time to come if we are to avoid the failure of our States and prevent widespread chaos on our continent, with many foreseeable global repercussions.

To meet that security challenge, the G-5 Sahel States have invested heavily in security. Security expenditures account for 18 to 32 per cent of the national budget, depending on the country — a tremendous burden on our economies and a drain on our basic social services, whose portion of the State budget diminishes significantly every year. It is in the context of all those emergencies and enormous challenges that we appeal to the Security Council and all our partners to further support the invaluable efforts of the G-5 Sahel member States.

Such support should lead to the full operationalization of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force as soon as possible. The Force is up and running today, but it is still being equipped. Although it has mounted some operations, the lack of equipment, particularly heavy equipment, remains a real handicap for the Force to reach its full operational capability.

In addition, it should be noted that the technical agreement among the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the European Union and the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, which helps support the Force's operations on the ground, covers only operations on Malian territory. The support provided under the agreement therefore benefits only two of the seven established battalions. However, as has already been demonstrated, the threat exists throughout the Sahel.

We therefore welcome and take note of the recommendation of Secretary-General António Guterres to the Council to explore the possibility of

providing support through MINUSMA to all battalions operating within the framework of the Joint Force, on the condition that the latter or other partners take responsibility for the delivery of assistance in their areas of operation, that is, outside Malian territory.

On behalf of the G-5 Sahel, I ask the Security Council to accede to our current request, endorsed by the Secretary-General, to establish a new United Nations approach to support the Joint Force and thereby enable it to better respond to the security challenge, which otherwise risks creating a dangerous situation in the Sahelo-Saharan strip and well beyond.

The fight against terrorism in the Sahel is a struggle for the survival of the G-5 Sahel States. There is a real threat of its expansion to coastal regions, or even the destabilization of the entire region. The recent abduction of two French nationals in northern Benin is a serious warning about the risk of such an expansion, because Benin is not in the Sahel. And that dangerous environment, owing to the terrorist threat, could potentially increase the incidence of risky and clandestine migration.

The fight against terrorism and other related criminal activities in the Sahel region is a collective responsibility and should be handled with the same resolve that was shown in other countries and regions, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Given the urgent nature of the actions that must be taken, the member States of the G-5 Sahel cannot succeed on their own. It is therefore time for the international community to consider the creation of an international coalition to further tackle the phenomenon of terrorism in the G-5 Sahel area and throughout the Sahel.

It is also time for the international community to take a clear position on the resolution of the Libyan crisis. Libya remains a safe haven and breeding ground for terrorists and criminals of all kinds and therefore the main factor of destabilization in our region.

The President: I thank Mr. Barry for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Buyoya.

Mr. Buyoya (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, I would like to congratulate the Indonesian presidency of the Security Council for the month of May.

I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for inviting the African Union to this biannual briefing on the situation in the Sahel, in particular the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). I also commend the Secretary-General for his excellent report (S/2019/371), which covers all issues in the Sahel.

At the time of this briefing, the security situation remains difficult in the Sahelo-Saharan region. In Mali, terrorist acts in the north have persisted and have spread to central Mali, while intercommunal conflicts have exacerbated an already worrisome situation. The attack on the Dioura camp and the massacre of civilians in Ogossagou, which killed more people than all the terrorist attacks in 2018 combined, have made headlines in recent days.

In the Niger, in addition to terrorist incursions into border areas with Mali and attacks on police stations, the country also faces insurgents from Boko Haram in the south, particularly in Bosso and Diffa, where the many attacks claimed by that group have led to a massive displacement to the centre of the country.

The 14 May attack in Mangaizé, in the Tillabéri region of western Niger near the Malian border, which targeted a military column of the Nigerian armed forces and killed 28 people, was a reminder that the infamous Islamic State is still active in the tri-border area. The African Union once again condemns that despicable act and offers its condolences to the families, the aggrieved and the Government of the Niger.

In Burkina Faso we have observed an expansion in the terrorist brutality from the north to the east, and even in the centre of the country, with a trend towards the targeting of churches in recent days. We can see evidence of that in the heinous attacks perpetrated on Sunday, 12 May, in a Catholic church in Dablo, in the centre-north of the country, which resulted in the death of six people, including the parish priest, and on 13 May, in the north of the country, where four believers were kidnapped and then brutally murdered. The expansion of terrorist attacks to the south-east of the country now means that the threat is expanding towards Togo, Benin and Ghana. In Chad, in addition to insecurity linked to the activities of the terrorist group Boko Haram, the country fell victim in January to a rebel attack in the north-east.

The presence of the Malian Armed forces in Operation Barkhane has not able to prevent the deterioration of the security situation in the Sahel. It

is that continued deterioration of the security situation that led the leaders of the States of the Group of Five for the Sahel to establish the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. The African Union commended that extremely responsible decision, which is in line with the principles of the African Peace and Security Architecture. The African Union firmly supported that decision, and its Peace and Security Council, at its meeting on 13 April 2017, adopted the strategic concept of operations and authorized the deployment of the Force for an initial period of 12 months.

The Peace and Security Council renewed the mandate of the Joint Force at its meeting on 9 April, while also noting the progress that had been made, the operations conducted and the support that countries continue to provide to the Force. The Peace and Security Council congratulated the countries of the region as well as the Force Commander and encouraged them to forge ahead.

The Peace and Security Council addressed a number of recommendations, namely, that the financing promised for the Force during the donor conference organized in February 2018 in Brussels be made available quickly; that the assistance of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali be expanded to cover the entirety of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force; and that the African Union Commission consider how it can further support the Force as part of a comprehensive strategic vision for stabilizing the Sahel region. I would like to take this opportunity to recall the regular requests from the Heads of State of the G-5 Sahel for the Joint Force to enjoy direct financing from the United Nations and operate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General.

Given the situation prevailing in the Sahel region, the operationalization of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force has now become an absolute and urgent necessity. This is an effort that the entire international community should support. It is, however, an effort that must be part of a comprehensive perspective that takes into account the other challenges of the Sahel region, such as governance, development and climate change. The African Union aligns itself with that vision because it believes that it will provide greater hope for the people.

On the security front, the African Union has revitalized the Nouakchott process in order to strengthen

regional security. On the political front, the African Union continues to be engaged in the peace process in Mali and also in Libya and will continue its efforts to resolve the crises that are besetting those countries.

In terms of development, the African Union is supporting the countries of the Lake Chad basin in the framework of the Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram. The African Union continues to support the G-5 Sahel in advocating for the mobilization of the resources pledged during the partners and donors coordination conference in Nouakchott on 6 December 2018 for the financing of the G-5 Sahel Priority Investment Programme. The African Union also recently held in Niamey a regional conference on climate change in the Sahel and adopted relevant resolutions.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the African Union firmly supports the report of the Secretary-General and asserts that no effort should be spared in supporting the G-5 Sahel Joint Force.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Losada Fernández.

Mr. Losada Fernández (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity given once again to the European Union (EU) to participate in the discussions of the Security Council on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). This meeting is undoubtedly an important step in increasing the strength of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, and it is, as pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/371), imperative to support to it.

Indeed, we all note the deterioration in the security situation in the Sahel. Security in the Sahel represents not only the security of the States in the region as well as the security of Europe; it represents the security of all. The European Union therefore supports the Secretary-General's report and remains strongly engaged, just as it was in Brussels two days ago, on 14 May, with the Foreign and Defence Ministers of the EU member States and the G-5 Sahel.

I also note that stability in the Sahel has a corollary. There will be no lasting stability in the Sahel without the full, effective and inclusive implementation of the provisions of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The EU is working to that end and encourages the Malian parties and the new Government of Mali

in redeploying the reconstituted security and defence forces in northern Mali and implementing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

Since the establishment of the G-5 Sahel, in 2014, the European Union has actively supported its increasing presence, in terms of both security and development, by helping to mobilize the international community. That support is one of the priorities of the foreign policy of the European Union and its member States. I would like to bring three points to the Council's attention.

First, the European Union will continue to support the operationalization of the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel in its various components, including its police component. Continued support must be accompanied by greater involvement by the G-5 Sahel States in achieving objectives on the ground. That was the main message conveyed at the ministerial meetings held in Brussels earlier this week and is the condition for rebuilding international support.

Efforts must remain focused on the implementation of the compliance framework on respect for human rights and international humanitarian law for the Joint Force operations and on the judicialization of the Force. Nearly 800 European experts from three Common Security and Defence Policy missions — the European Union capacity-building mission (EUCAP) Sahel Niger, EUCAP Sahel Mali and the European Union Training Mission in Mali — are present alongside defence and security forces in the Sahel and are providing advice and training.

Together with our Sahelian partners, we have embarked on a process of adapting and regionalizing those missions in order to better support the Joint Force and meet the needs of the security and defence forces of all G-5 Sahel countries. A regional advisory and coordination cell will soon be deployed in Nouakchott to better support the Permanent Secretariat.

Those experts remain at the disposal of our Sahelian partners to help them, in particular, refine and revise the Force's concept of operations in order to first, prioritize the most unstable areas; secondly, allow for the increased mobility of the Force in those areas; and, thirdly, ensure rapid transfer to internal security forces to ensure the prosecution of persons arrested — all with strict respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

With regard to the police component, the EU is working to respond to the needs expressed by the various States of the G-5 Sahel for the operationalization of their national police components in order to enable them to fulfil three designated tasks: investigation, intelligence and supervision. That support will of course be provided in coordination with the United Nations.

The EU has provided robust support for the development and operational implementation of the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel in the amount of €100 million, which covers equipment, services and infrastructure — €75 million; support for the peace and security structures of the G-5 Sahel — €5 million; support for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to provide operational and logistical support for the Joint Force in Mali — €10 million; and support for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the establishment and implementation of a compliance framework for respect for human rights and international humanitarian law for Joint Force operations — €10 million. The latter two categories of support are provided under the EU-United Nations-G-5 Sahel technical arrangement signed on 23 February 2018 in Brussels.

With regard to support for the Joint Force through MINUSMA, it should be noted that resolution 2391 (2017) allows the Mission to provide operational and logistical support only on Malian territory and not in all G-5 Sahel countries; as noted previously, that could regrettably limit support to battalions in operations in third countries. The EU also supports the Secretary-General's recommendation that MINUSMA be authorized to provide life consumables to all battalions operating within the framework of the Joint Force and the compliance framework on respect for human rights and international humanitarian law for the Joint Force operations.

Secondly, with respect to the compliance framework on respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, it should be noted that the first pre-financing tranche of €5 million was paid to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in June 2018 and that initial activities have begun, such as the deployment of a technical assistance team to the Joint Force to assist military staff in reviewing key documents and providing training for military officers. It is a very positive system and is unprecedented for an African operation. It must now

be applied and extended so as to prevent all forms of unacceptable and disreputable abuses that would discredit an operation in the eyes of the international community and civilians on the ground.

Thirdly, and lastly, the European Union plays a leading role in coordinating international support for the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel and welcomes the operationalization of the G-5 Sahel trust fund. The coordination hub, an ad hoc body set up by the European Union and recognized by resolution 2391 (2017), facilitates the coordination of bilateral assistance to the Joint Force by focusing donor support on the needs of the Force.

Following the establishment of the support committee of the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel, based in Mauritania, initial exchanges were conducted between the Force and the coordination hub. The establishment of the regional advisory and coordination cell in Nouakchott in July will also strengthen the support committee of the Joint Force and the transfer of the coordination hub to Nouakchott to establish full ownership of the process by the countries of the G-5 Sahel.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that cooperation between the United Nations and the EU is on an excellent footing, in particular the cooperation between the EU security and defence missions — both civilian and military — and MINUSMA on the ground. The EU fully supports the excellent and indispensable work of MINUSMA and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mahamat Annadif.

The European Union and its member States are determined to continue to build a partnership with the countries of the G-5 Sahel, which is vital for the region's security and development. The European Union is ready to continue its support in 2019 and 2020, subject to greater involvement by the States of the G-5 Sahel in achieving objectives on the ground. Such support also entails remobilizing the political and financial support of other international partners, as we have just done at the European level with the Ministers of the G-5 Sahel in Brussels.

Those mutual efforts must be shared by both sides and based on frank and effective dialogue between the EU and the G-5 Sahel and concrete progress on the ground. We must continue that momentum if we want our efforts to be maintained and strengthened. We count on the support of the Security Council, which is

essential if such efforts are to continue, both politically and in terms of logistical and financial support for the G-5 Sahel and its Joint Force.

The President: I thank Mr. Losada Fernández for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fedotov.

Mr. Fedotov: May I commend you, Mr. President, on bringing this very important and urgent matter to a meeting of the Security Council. I also thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Burkina Faso, Mr. Barry, for joining us.

I thank the Council for this opportunity to discuss how the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is supporting, and can further support, the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) countries to work together for security, stability and sustainable development.

UNODC is proud to have been a trusted partner of the G-5 Sahel since its inception, namely, through our programme contributing to the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. The UNODC Sahel programme is focused on enhancing the accessibility, efficiency and accountability of criminal justice systems to counter drug trafficking, as well as other forms of trafficking and organized crime, terrorism and corruption. That responds directly to the security and governance objectives set forth in the regional integrated strategy and is being implemented with neighbouring Maghreb countries, namely, Algeria and Morocco. UNODC puts great stock in our strategic partnership with the G-5 Sahel, which remains a top priority of our work in the field.

The G-5 Sahel secretariat and member States requested in 2017 that UNODC support development of a police component for the Joint Force to promote transparent, efficient and accountable judicial proceedings in the fight against organized crime and terrorism. Working with our G-5 Sahel partners, as well as with other countries and international organizations, we held consultations that resulted in the agreement of a conceptual and organizational framework, as well as principles for operationalizing the police component. As a result, investigative units have been established across the region.

UNODC has held numerous training workshops for the military, law enforcement and the judiciary to strengthen coordination between the Joint Force

and the Sahel criminal justice systems, safeguard human rights and prevent violations. The G-5 Sahel countries have achieved some notable results with our support, addressing, in particular, regional judicial cooperation and mutual legal assistance, firearms-marking, investigation of terrorism financing, illicit trafficking at airports and the resolution of backlogged cases involving terrorism suspects in overdue pretrial detention.

The results were made possible thanks to support from the Governments of Germany, Japan, the United States, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Belgium and France, as well as the European Union. Our G-5 Sahel partners deserve a great deal of credit for their commitment to advancing efforts through the Joint Force in a fragile security environment.

Looking forward, in view of the Burkina Faso presidency of the G-5 Sahel, UNODC seeks to further develop its support to the country and its neighbours. Nonetheless, we must be clear that many daunting challenges remain. There are, in particular, three areas where we urgently require the support of Member States to implement the police component of the Joint Force.

First, in the field of forensics, we need to provide equipment and training for law enforcement officers on crime scene investigation, addressing, in particular, evidence gathered by military personnel.

Secondly, we need support to further promote integrity measures within the Joint Force and national justice systems, with the ultimate objective of reinforcing trust between people and their defence and security forces.

Thirdly, we need to increase support to integrate women into the security structures of the G-5 Sahel member States and do more to enable and highlight the contributions of women in the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime in the Sahel.

The police component of the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel recognizes that in order to be sustainable and effective, security responses must respect human rights and promote justice. It represents an important and innovative mechanism to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime, and, at the same time, restore trust. I am grateful to the Council for bringing attention to the challenges we face in achieving those important objectives.

Predictable funding and the determined political commitment of the G-5 Sahel and the international community remain prerequisites for effective action. The UNODC is committed to working with all our partners to strengthen governance, security and development towards a safer, healthier and more prosperous Sahel.

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

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

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank all the briefers for their especially enlightening remarks. I particularly welcome the presence around this table of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Mr. Alpha Barry, in his capacity as current President of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). We truly appreciate the Minister's presence and once again extend a warm welcome to him.

I would like to begin my statement by expressing our heartfelt condolences to the Nigerien authorities following the tragic human toll of the terrorist ambush that struck the armed forces of the Niger along the Malian border, and I would like to reassure them that France stands in complete solidarity with them.

I would also like to pay tribute to the memory of all the civilians, national staff and members of Government and international armed forces alike who have lost their lives during intercommunal and terrorist violence, which unfortunately strikes the countries of the Sahel on an almost daily basis.

Lastly, I would like to make a heartfelt mention of the two French soldiers who died a few days ago in an operation to free hostages in Burkina Faso, following the national tribute that was paid to them yesterday. We especially appreciated the Minister's words in that regard.

In order to make progress, we must be clear about what we are seeing. The deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel is being fuelled by the spread of the terrorist threat and the increase in intercommunal violence. Such a deterioration poses an unprecedented risk to the stability of West Africa as a whole. The G-5 Sahel countries are now the first to be affected, but others will soon face the same challenges if adequate responses are not urgently provided.

We are therefore collectively engaged in a real race against time to stabilize the Sahel. It requires the urgent implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, a merciless fight against terrorist groups operating in the region, as well as good governance and the creation of sustainable economic opportunities for the people. As we all know, we will succeed only if we proceed simultaneously along the security and development tracks.

The G-5 Sahel Joint Force is a key element of the security component of those efforts, which complements the other security presences deployed in the region, each of which has its added value. The Joint Force is unique in its nature, without any real precedent or equivalent on the continent. It demonstrates the shared will of the G-5 Sahel States to coordinate the response to a threat, let us make no mistake, that has consequences for us all. Our shared responsibility as the international community is to provide them with support commensurate to what is at stake.

The latest — and significant — gains made have enabled the Joint Force to take a major step in its operationalization. In that regard, I would mention the resumption of operations, sending a strong signal of resilience, following the attack on the headquarters in Sévaré. I am also thinking of the full operationalization of the human rights compliance framework, demonstrating awareness that the Joint Force's activities can be effective only if it has the full support of the people. Lastly, I am thinking of the progress made in the deployment of the police component, which is essential for the proper functioning of the Force.

In this context, the full mobilization of the G-5 Sahel States is more crucial than ever so that the Joint Force is able to deliver on its full potential. Judicial proceedings against alleged perpetrators of any kind of infraction must also be brought to completion. The deployment of officers with provost duties as part of the Joint Force and the judicialization of the Force's action must be finalized, with the support of the various partners, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the European Union Common Security and Defence Policy Sahel and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

Beyond the commitment of the G-5 Sahel States, the success of the Joint Force will depend on the provision of effective and appropriate international

support. Much has already been done, notably thanks to the unprecedented mobilization of the European Union, which has already been mentioned, in liaison with the Permanent Secretariat of the G-5 Sahel. The Permanent Secretariat, whose activities I commend, should eventually become the sole interface for international aid and the needs on the ground.

We also wish to continue improving the effectiveness of the existing international arrangements. In this context, we will, at the forthcoming renewal of MINUSMA's mandate, propose clarifying the modalities for the use and delivery of support provided under the technical agreement to ensure that it better meets the needs of the Force. Our ultimate aim remains to strengthen multilateral support to the Joint Force by equipping it with a robust mandate and implementing a logistics package, because we know that only with predictable and sustainable support can we ensure the success of G-5 Sahel efforts in the medium term. The recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2019/371) remain our compass in this regard. We are ready to take them to the Council as soon as the Joint Force makes its first significant progress on the ground.

In this difficult regional context, the situation in Burkina Faso deserves our full attention. The recent Security Council mission to the Sahel provided an opportunity to observe the mobilization of the Burkina Faso authorities on the ground but also the need for significant international support to enable them to restore stability. France fully supports the process begun at the initiative of the Secretary-General to adjust the United Nations presence on the ground, in the light of the needs generated by the deteriorating situation in the region. We hope that the United Nations response will be ambitious and meet the expectations of the Burkina Faso authorities in the fields of humanitarian aid and development, training of the security forces, respect for human rights, the promotion of the rule of law and support for the fight against terrorism. In our view, the Peacebuilding Commission is the appropriate entity to support this process, on which we expect the Secretariat to provide regular briefings.

The threats weighing upon the Sahel call for redoubled commitment and the full attention and mobilization of the Security Council. I assure the Council of France's steadfast determination in this regard, and we will propose a press statement to that effect at the end of this meeting.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks the Indonesian presidency of the Security Council for having organized this briefing on the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). I welcome the presence among us this morning of Mr. Alpha Barry, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso and President of the Council of Ministers of the G-5 Sahel. My delegation also thanks Mr. Pierre Buyoya, African Union High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, Ms. Bintou Keita, Mr. Angel Losada Fernández and Mr. Yury Fedotov for their informative briefings and the pertinent recommendations contained therein.

The West African subregion is the target of terrorist acts of horrific and growing violence, carried out by jihadist hordes, whose members demonstrate each day their choice to renounce their humanity. This can be seen in the numerous attacks against populations and places of worship, followed by the massacre of worshippers at prayer and mass carnage in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, countries very close to mine, both geographically and emotionally. Only a few days ago, two French tourists were abducted from Pendjari National Park in Benin and taken to Burkina Faso, then, thankfully, later liberated by commandos from contingents of the Burkina Faso Armed Forces and French Special Forces, whose professionalism has been unanimously recognized. Côte d'Ivoire would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the two French soldiers and the Beninese tour guide who lost their lives.

This tragic event has three major lessons for us: the transnational nature of the terrorist threat, the potential links between cross-border criminal networks and terrorist groups and, above all, the urgent need for all involved in the fight against terrorism to join efforts so as to respond in a manner commensurate with these phenomena. In this respect, the meeting recently convened in Accra by the President Nana Akufo-Ado, which brought together Burkina Faso, President of the Conference of Heads of State of G-5 Sahel, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin and Togo, reflected the acute awareness of that need. It is therefore reasonable to welcome this new awareness and hope that it continues to grow. Indeed, we welcome the significant progress that the meeting has already generated.

Despite these complex challenges and in a context of weak national economic performance, the G-5 Sahel States have to date spared no effort to bring about the full operationalization of the Joint Force, which has undoubtedly added value in the fight against

cross-border criminal networks and terrorist groups in the Sahel. Their ongoing efforts, supported by the United Nations and bilateral and institutional partners, including the European Union, have facilitated encouraging progress in the consolidation of the Joint Force. Côte d'Ivoire therefore welcomes the positive trends identified in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/371), including the increase in force strength of Joint Force to 75 per cent of its operational capacity; the ongoing efforts to address issues relating to training and the provision of appropriate equipment; the progress made in the implementation of the civilian and police components and, with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the human rights compliance framework; the advances made in defining rules of engagement, a code of conduct and procedures for interaction with civilian populations; and the restructuring of the Permanent Secretariat of the G-5 Sahel. Côte d'Ivoire welcomes those significant advances and shares the Secretary-General's views with respect to the persistence of challenges related to, inter alia, the financing of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, support for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in accordance with resolution 2391 (2017), and humanitarian, economic and social development issues in the Sahel region.

With regard to the financing of the Joint Force, my country unconditionally endorses the terms of the communiqué of the Conference of Heads of State of G-5 Sahel urging G-5 Sahel partners to honour their financial pledges. Despite the financial and logistical efforts already made by bilateral and multilateral partners, Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced that only predictable and sustainable funding under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations will ensure the effectiveness of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. My country is of the view that the Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment of a support office funded through assessed contributions and independent of MINUSMA would undoubtedly be a useful tool for predictable and sustainable financing in support of the Joint Force.

Moreover, in view of the difficulties encountered in conducting operations under way, it is clear that a review is needed to amend the technical agreement relating to MINUSMA support for the Joint Force. As recommended by the G-5 Sahel Council of Ministers, such a review should allow for determining the

possibility of extending the scope of the assistance provided by MINUSMA.

In order for it to be effective over time, the security response provided by the G-5 Sahel Joint Force must be part of a broader approach, taking into account the structural foundations of the current insecurity and instability in the Sahel region. Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced that security initiatives in the Sahel will have a significant and lasting impact only if the fight against poverty and the effects of climate change, improved governance and access to basic social services and economic opportunities remain our major priorities. In this regard, my country welcomes the adoption by the States members of the G-5 Sahel of the Priority Investment Programme, which will enable the financing of 40 developmental projects. To that end, the G-5 Sahel hopes that the financing pledges made at the Nouakchott donors conference held on 6 December 2018 will be fulfilled as soon as possible, with a view to bringing the benefits of inclusive economic development to the people of the region. It is nevertheless necessary to ensure complementarity and coherence among the G-5 Sahel Priority Investment Programme and other development initiatives, in particular those of the Sahel Alliance, in order to avoid wasting resources.

Côte d'Ivoire shares the Secretary-General's assessment of a deterioration of the security situation in the Sahel region, with a possible spillover effect on coastal West African countries. In considering the full scope of the threat, those countries have agreed to strengthen their cooperation in combating terrorism and cross-border organized crime within the framework of the Accra initiative. Côte d'Ivoire believes that, as part of a preventive approach, the Accra initiative deserves support and should be synergized with the work of the G-5 Sahel by building bridges of cooperation in the military and intelligence areas.

Cross-border criminal networks and terrorist armed groups clearly pose constant threats to peace, stability and development in the Sahel region and throughout West Africa. In addition, as we confront the hydra's head of terrorism, our determination to preserve the humanist values of peace, fraternity, solidarity and tolerance, which are the foundations of our societies, must therefore be firm. Our support for the G-5 Sahel must be just as strong. The eradication of terrorism is undoubtedly a long-term shared endeavour, which will require patience and consistency in our efforts. It will also require the United Nations and all development

partners to maintain and strengthen the momentum of support and solidarity with the States members of the G-5 Sahel.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Keita, His Excellency Foreign Minister Barry, African Union High Representative Buyoya, European Union Special Representative Losada Fernández and Executive Director Fedotov for their respective briefings. I commend Foreign Minister Barry for coming to New York to brief the Security Council.

At present, the situation in the Sahel region as a whole is stable despite multiple challenges. In order to achieve stability and development in the Sahel, the international community must take an integrated approach and work in many areas from politics to security to development. It is necessary to continue supporting the countries of the region, including the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), so that they can address regional security challenges in an independent manner. I wish to highlight the following priority areas.

First, it is important to advance the political settlement of regional hot-button issues. In order to bring about peace and stability in the Sahel, it is imperative to move the peace process forward in the countries concerned. Military means alone cannot solve regional security issues. It is essential to continue supporting the various Malian parties in carrying out inclusive dialogue and consultations and expediting the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. It is imperative to focus on tackling problems beyond the region, such as the Libyan crisis, in order to mitigate their negative impact on the Sahel.

Secondly, it necessary to step up support for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. The countries of the G-5 Joint Force had to overcome many difficulties, such as the deteriorating security situation and the lack of operational capacity and equipment shortages, when it resumed operations earlier this year, thereby demonstrating the determination of the countries of the region to step up the development of the Joint Force. The international community should provide continuing support for the Joint Force. In accordance with the relevant agreements, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali should continue to provide the Joint Force with a support package.

Thirdly, it is essential to take stock of economic and social development and tackle the root causes of conflicts. The Sahel faces many problems, ranging from poverty to unemployment to the deterioration of the environment. The international community should help the countries of the Sahel take on the development challenges and tap into their own potential. It is necessary to help them formulate a Priority Investment Programme, support Secretary-General Guterres in implementing the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and its support plan and assist the Sahel in achieving sustainable development.

Fourthly, we must attach importance to the role of regional mechanisms, support African countries in finding African solutions to African problems, encourage the Heads of State of the G-5 Sahel, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and other regional and subregional organizations to take the lead in addressing issues related to the Sahel, and assist the G-5 Sahel Permanent Secretariat in its capacity-building efforts to secure as soon as possible the ability to coordinate international community support for the Joint Force. China supports the G-5 Sahel in assuming ownership of its security responsibilities in responding to regional security challenges, and we support the United Nations in its efforts aimed at providing necessary financial support for the Joint Force.

China has been actively implementing the China-Africa peace and security measures announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Out of the assistance package to the AU, a total of 300 million yuan has been disbursed in order to support counter-terrorism actions in the Sahel and the development of the Joint Force. In addition, a further \$1.5 million in cash assistance will be provided to the G-5 Sahel Permanent Secretariat. Clearly demonstrating China's resolute support for peace and security in Africa, such measures will play an important role in maintaining peace and security both in the Sahel and in Africa as a whole.

China is ready to work with the international community to do its part in enabling the Sahel and the African continent to achieve stability and prosperity.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I would like to thank today's briefers and to give a warm welcome to Foreign Minister Barry.

The past six months in the Sahel have been concerning. The security situation continues to deteriorate. Radical elements have driven intercommunal violence to an all-time high. The massacre in Ogossagou points towards potential widespread intercommunal violence throughout the region. Meanwhile, terrorist groups and criminal organizations continue to thrive, moving across borders, attacking civilian communities and Government and international security forces.

Such insecurity impacts all West Africa. The heroic rescue of four kidnapped civilians last week, during which the two French soldiers lost their lives, reminds us all of the danger. The United States honours the two fallen French soldiers and their families for their loss and their great sacrifice.

The international and peacekeeping forces alone will not resolve the security crisis in the region. That is why it is critical to work on the long-term goal of fully operationalizing the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). The United States recognizes that and, thus far, has committed approximately \$111 million to the G-5 Sahel States to fill capability gaps by providing equipment, training and advisory support.

We are encouraged by the resumption of operations of the Joint Force and we pay tribute to the sacrifices that Member States are making in order to bring stability to the region. We call on the Joint Force and Member States to continue to take the necessary steps to become fully operational, including through adherence to the compliance framework to prevent, investigate, address and publicly report violations and abuses of human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law.

The United States continues to believe that bilateral assistance remains the best way to support the Force and is disappointed that other members of the Council and beyond continue to call for Chapter VII authorization and United Nations-assessed funding for the Joint Force. As I noted in my remarks last November (see S/PV.8402) and as the United States has repeatedly stated, Chapter VII authorization is not needed to accomplish the Joint Force's mission, as the G-5 Sahel States already have existing agreements in place for military operations in their respective territories.

We note with regret that, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's recent report (S/2019/371), the G-5 Joint Force in Mali is not sufficiently leveraging the established technical agreement with the United Nations

Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the European Union. We call on the Joint Force, the Malian Government and partners to find ways to help the Force to use that opportunity more efficiently. Some of our briefers and Council colleagues have expressed an interest in exploring possible ways to deliver reimbursable support to the Joint Force outside Mali. I urge our colleagues to recall that in resolution 2391 (2017) the Security Council encouraged that the technical agreement constitute a temporary measure towards full self-sufficiency of the Joint Force. In addition, the Council emphasized that any facilitation of support through the technical agreement should not adjust or adversely impact MINUSMA's own operations or put its personnel at undue risk. The United States believes that the international community should focus its collective support on the G-5 Sahel Joint Force as an African-owned, African-led response to regional instability.

The dire security situation demands that the international community focus its collective efforts in the Sahel in a smart, deliberate and collaborative way. As others have noted, that requires that the region and its partners continue to pursue more than security responses alone and address the root causes of conflict through coordinated humanitarian, health, agricultural, governance and development assistance. As I have stated before, through our effective coordination with the security and development actors in the region and the leadership of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States in solving regional and local disputes, significant improvements in security are achievable.

The sustainability of those improvements will depend on the progress of the G-5 Sahel States towards effective governance, the creation of access to opportunity and respect for human rights, accountability and inclusiveness. It is also critical to increase the roles for women, young people and marginalized groups in decision-making. Together, such combined endeavours can achieve durable peace and stability and unleash the potential of this vital region and its people.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome His Excellency Mr. Alpha Barry, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Burkina Faso, and wish to thank him for presence here among us. From this seat and on behalf of His Excellency Biang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, allow me to convey

to His Excellency Mr. Roth Marc Christian Kaboré, Chairman-in-Office of the Conference of Heads of States of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), our very best wishes for success in leading the fight against terrorism and its consequences for the Sahelo-Saharan region. We reiterate our thanks to Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant-Secretary-General for Africa, His Excellency President Pierre Buyoya, African Union High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, Mr. Angel Losada Fernández and Mr. Yury Fedotov for their enlightening briefings.

The Sahel region is at the heart of the concerns not only at the level of the West Africa subregion but also at the continental and international levels. The climate of insecurity and instability in the Sahel is increasingly worrying. For several months, communal conflicts in Burkina Faso and Mali have added to the security, humanitarian and development problems. The increasing mobility and sophistication of terrorist armed groups and ethnic militias operating in the region have led to an increase in the number of casualties in recent months.

Allow me to express here the strong condemnation by the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea of the recent incidents of intercommunal violence and the asymmetric and coordinated attacks against the armed forces, United Nations peacekeeping forces and the defenceless civilian population, particularly in Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger. We convey our condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the Governments of the countries concerned, and in particular extend our most heartfelt sorrow to the Government of the Niger for the more than 20 soldiers who died yesterday in a terrorist attack and to France for the two soldiers who fell in the field of honour while rescuing the hostages kidnapped by the terrorists.

In that context, we believe that there should be no feeling of impunity and abandonment on the part of the States of the region. We therefore reiterate the urgent need for the national authorities to act swiftly to identify and prosecute those responsible, once identified and detained, to the fullest extent of the law. That would reassure the population, restore the authority and legitimacy of the States and weaken the sense of impunity that fosters violence.

To end the conflicts gripping the Sahel, it is necessary to provide rapid responses to the crisis while proposing a sustainable approach. In other words,

we need to reconcile what on the surface may seem irreconcilable: the most pressing and lasting needs.

Indeed, there are many urgent needs. Due to the lack of security, 900 schools, for example, had to close in Mali and in neighbouring Burkina Faso, 440 schools must also remain closed, excluding 66,000 children from the education system in the current year. But the G-5 Sahel must do more than fight terrorism. While security investments are necessary, they remain insufficient. Security pressure has generated significant macroeconomic and fiscal costs for every country of the region, including negative effects on social investment.

We must also be aware that military approach alone will not resolve the security crisis in the Sahel. We must undertake a reflection on excessive militarization — in a region in which almost all the world's armies are present, which makes it attractive to extremist and terrorist groups of all kinds — which has continually dragged the States of the Sahel into a cycle of exponential increases in military expenditure for their survival. The cycle is unsustainable and is being maintained at the expense of the investments needed to develop the region and offer hope to young people.

Numerous reports have revealed that armed groups recruit either from helpless and unemployed youth or from rural communities that feel neglected by public authorities. It is therefore important that States become aware of the distress of those millions of citizens and generate tangible and lasting political responses. Accordingly, projects within the frameworks of the Sahel Alliance and the Priority Investment Programme must remain a priority for implementation by the G-5 Sahel States, with the support of international donors and partners.

Parallel to that work, in Mali, a country where extremism has spread, retaking national territory must also be a priority. The different communities have always lived in peace and harmony throughout the country, while conflicts and tensions were managed through dialogue. The State must restore that tradition and culture of dialogue, rebuild confidence and promote reconciliation and cohesion among communities through coexistence in the context of home-grown processes, which will involve raising awareness of the importance of peace for development and the promotion of positive values, but also of the resolution of land disputes and the administration of justice.

The close collaboration of the G-5 Sahel with such partners as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and INTERPOL should be underlined. The joint assessment missions carried out between July and October 2018 between the Permanent Secretariat and the UNODC will undoubtedly create a legal framework for the implementation of the police component in order to ensure that the Joint Force can adequately fulfil its mission to combat terrorism and organized crime by ensuring transparent judicial follow-up. We also commend the strategic partnership with INTERPOL, which is essential for the exchange of information and the use of its database for the registration of Joint Force investigations.

Furthermore, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea welcomes the final communiqué of the fifth ordinary session of the Conference of the G-5 Sahel Heads of State, in which they reaffirmed their willingness to mobilize more domestic resources for the full operationalization of the Joint Force. In line with the 9 April communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, we stress the need for the Security Council to extend support from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) beyond Mali to all components of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force as part of an integrated approach to its work. It is certainly an issue that cannot be avoided in the next month's negotiations on the renewal of MINUSMA's mandate.

In view of the fact that the situation in the Sahel is a real threat to international peace and security, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, for its part, expresses its support for the calls by the leaders of the region to place the mandate of the Joint Force under Chapter VII of the Charter, in order to provide it with the additional political legitimacy that this important initiative and the critical situation in the region deserve. Moreover, the critical situation of not taking rapid and decisive measures could extend to the coastal countries of the area, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Benin and Ghana. We believe that it is necessary, as Minister Barry indicated, to assemble an international coalition similar to those assembled for Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, but this time with the help of the African Union, so as to stop this gangrene of insecurity. Without such a coalition, this scourge would extend beyond West Africa.

In conclusion, allow me to point out that, although the implementation of all the aspects that we have highlighted will not return to us the thousands of

human lives lost, they are nevertheless likely to create the conditions for optimism and new hope for peaceful coexistence, the acceptance of intercommunity harmony and the return of the authority of States in all its fullness so that they might assume their constitutional prerogatives, provide legitimate protection to persons and property and stand as united and indivisible States. I would conclude by congratulating each of the G-5 Sahel States for the multiple efforts they are making within the framework of the complete operationalization of the Joint Force.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank today's briefers, in particular His Excellency Foreign Minister Barry, for allowing us to put the situation in the Sahel into context. At the same time, we commend the progress made with respect to the operationalization of the Joint Force.

Taking into account the information provided by the briefers on the security situation, as well as the need for the creation of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) to combat the shared conflicts in the region, the Security Council is called upon to support those African countries that are still striving to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime at the regional and subregional levels with a view to restoring peace and security in the Sahel region. We are concerned about the deteriorating levels of security in the region, which are reflected in the current escalation of violence, mostly directed against civilians, as well as the unprecedented levels of intercommunity violence aggravated by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

In that regard, we encourage the authorities to take the necessary actions to address this scourge by strengthening control measures, including the Plan of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. Furthermore, we encourage States that manufacture and import arms, ammunition and related materials to strengthen transfer and control mechanisms in order to prevent the final destination of those weapons from becoming conflict zones, and thereby save lives.

The insecurity in the Sahel has resulted in the deterioration of the humanitarian situation throughout the area, as well as the internal displacement of large population groups, and has triggered a food crisis that will require the treatment of approximately 274,000 children for severe acute malnutrition, an increase

of more than 60 per cent as compared with original estimates. In Mali and Burkina Faso alone, more than 5 million people need humanitarian assistance. Of those, over half are children who, in addition to facing food shortages, are condemned to the misfortune of not having access to education. Owing to the closure of schools, they do not have the necessary tools to develop their abilities or prepare them to be agents for change in society.

The Dominican Republic is a country that firmly believes in young people as transformers of society and supports the recommendations of the fourth report of the African Union Peace and Security Council with regard to the implementation of the road map. We therefore would like to reaffirm that the inclusion of investment in, and cooperation with, young people in the Sahel is a possible avenue for them to achieve greater potential. That also addresses high youth unemployment and contributes to peace and security in the region.

With regard to the role of women, we see that the rights of women in the Sahel are systematically violated by terrorist groups. That is compounded by their extremely difficult survival in the midst of poverty, armed conflict, violent extremism, gender discrimination and sexual violence. All of that is unacceptable. Therefore, while we have a refocused United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, it is important to further align that strategy with the 2018-2022 United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel, the 2017-2020 action plan of the Economic Community of West African States for women and peace and security, and the road map for the implementation of the activities of the G-5 Sahel Women's Platform. In that regard, we acknowledge the training and capacity-building measures for the staff of the G-5 Joint Force and the signing of a new operational procedure applicable to all those arrested and held by the Joint Force, with specific and differentiated treatment for women and children, with a view to protecting civilians caught up in violence. We welcome the support of the international community to that end.

Moreover, given the continued threats resulting from climate change, it is crucial to continue to strengthen the cooperation mechanisms of the Force with other regional and subregional initiatives so as to promote sustainable development in the region. In that regard, we welcome the efforts to step up the fight against climate change, in line with the United Nations

Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, included in the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel.

We must continue to strengthen the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel and hasten the creation of the G-5 Joint Force trust fund, which will help the Force to overcome the many difficulties it faces in terms of equipment, training and infrastructure, among other challenges. That will allow it to improve its operations in combating terrorism, illegal migration, trafficking in human beings and other forms of cross-border crime. That financing would also provide it with predictable funds and timely disbursements so that it can fulfil its mandates.

We commend the European Union, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, Operation Barkhane and the Malian Armed Forces on the creation of the Mali coordination body with a view to improving the exchange of information and coordination among the various military and security forces present in the country. We also commend the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on the assistance it provides to the G-5 Sahel countries to address terrorism and organized transnational crime. We urge the continued disbursement of pledged contributions to the mechanism for peace in Africa with a view to amassing the necessary resources for the stabilization of the region.

In conclusion, the Dominican Republic agrees with the Secretary-General that security initiatives, although clearly necessary, will not be a panacea for the Sahel's problems. In order to combat terrorism and cross-border crime in the Sahel, in addition to providing the G-5 Joint Force with the necessary funding in a predictable manner to increase the capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of its operations, we must also do more to solve the underlying problems fuelling the conflict with a view to building capacities that contribute to sustainable socioeconomic development in the Sahel region. Otherwise, the Sahel region will continue in its spiral of instability and foreign troops will in all likelihood be there for longer than any of us can imagine. Statistics tell us that the various factions of armed groups are expanding their reach in the Sahel and in neighbouring countries, and violence is therefore spilling over borders, threatening to weaken States and fragment populations. Like the Secretary-General, we believe that more must be done to avoid further deterioration in the security situation. The

United Nations and the Security Council are called upon to seek both national and regional joint solutions in order to achieve peace and security in the region and therefore improve the well-being and rights of the inhabitants of the Sahel.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): First of all, I would like to thank all our briefers for their very insightful and comprehensive statements. I extend a very warm and special welcome to Mr. Barry, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso.

Germany attaches great importance to peace and stability in the Sahel region. Chancellor Angela Merkel underlined that during her visit to the region only two weeks ago at a Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) summit in Ouagadougou, where she met with the Heads of State of the G-5 upon the invitation of President Kaboré. The Chancellor made very clear during her visit that Germany supports the G-5 Sahel, and the Joint Force in particular, and is ready to consider ways to increase support for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force by the Council. Because of the pressing challenges, we expect more rapid progress with regard to the operationalization of the Joint Force and the political integration of the G-5 Sahel as a regional organization. Let me focus on four specific messages in that regard.

First, Germany is a strong partner of the G-5 Sahel and has contributed about €28 million in support to the Joint Force so far. The Joint Force must now quickly increase its operational capabilities, as we have heard from many of those who briefed us. In that regard, we expect to see stronger engagement by all G-5 Sahel countries. We also call on all international partners that have pledged support to increase the predictability of funding for the Joint Force.

Secondly, Germany is certain that the Joint Force has the potential to develop into a key player for achieving more security in the Sahel, but we are not there yet. That is why we are convinced that there is a continued need for an international security presence in the Sahel region for the time being. That includes the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, which should be equipped with the necessary resources to implement its mandate.

Thirdly, Germany strongly believes that safeguarding human rights and building inclusive societies are in fact prerequisites to successfully counter terrorism and extremism. The experience of injustice often is a decisive factor in breeding extremism. When

combating terrorism and extremism, there cannot be any compromise when it comes to respecting human rights. Therefore, we fully support the human rights compliance framework of the Joint Force and thank the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for its dedicated work in that regard.

Fourthly, Germany is equally convinced that a military approach to fighting terrorism and insecurity will not be successful in isolation. Human security should be increased through civilian police capabilities that can remain engaged even when serious threats of terrorism are gone. We therefore strongly support police cooperation and training in the context of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force.

If we take a more strategic, comprehensive, holistic look at the challenges at hand, we see that what is needed is a joined-up approach encompassing various fields — specifically, security, peacebuilding and development. That also guides Germany's bilateral and regional support to the G-5 Sahel countries. In total, Germany has been providing at least €1.7 billion to the countries of the Sahel for the period from 2017 to 2020, and €1 billion through development cooperation. During her recent visit to the region, Chancellor Merkel announced that Germany will make an addition €60 million available for regional development. During his recent visit to the region, our Foreign Minister, Heiko Maas, announced that Germany will be providing €46 million for security and stabilization in Burkina Faso and its border region. In total, Germany's support to the G-5 in terms of civilian crisis prevention, security and stabilization has amounted to more than €145 million since 2016.

Since we have the honour of having the Foreign Minister of Burkina Faso with us today, I would also like to say a few words about the situation in his country. Burkina Faso is a crucially important partner in the stabilization of the Sahel region. We are therefore witnessing the deteriorating security situation there with great concern. In the past year there has been a significant increase in terrorist attacks across large parts of the country, and the reports of recent attacks in the north and east, as well as the imminent risk of the further spread of terrorist activities towards the south, only highlight the fragility of the situation. We are particularly alarmed about the tremendous surge in human rights violations and the rising numbers of civilian casualties, and our thoughts are with all the victims of terrorist attacks, particularly those soldiers

who recently sacrificed their lives in the fight against terrorism. In that context, I would also like to express my condolences regarding the French force members who recently paid with lives in a hostage situation. Germany honours their sacrifice. While those who fight terrorism are a very important factor in our overall strategy, we all benefit from their efforts to increase security and stability in the region and beyond.

The proliferation of terrorist networks and organized crime across the Sahel, resulting from largely uncontrolled border areas, emphasizes the fact that we are dealing with regional rather than national challenges. We therefore encourage our friend and partner the Government of Burkina Faso to intensify its efforts to seek regional and international partnerships aimed at countering such developments. We must do that together. During the Security Council's March visit, led jointly by France, Côte d'Ivoire and Germany, Council members learned about the security challenges first-hand, and we would again like to thank the Government of Burkina Faso for its generous support to the Security Council mission. I think one of the most important takeaways from the visit was that it is important to work together to prevent a further escalation of the situation. We welcome the fact that the Secretariat has demonstrated its willingness to shift gears and adapt the United Nations country office to the new challenges. We encourage it to make progress in that regard and to advance the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

Before concluding, I would just like to say a few words about today's meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission this afternoon. We feel it is a very important step in rallying and coordinating international support in the light of the tremendous challenges that Burkina Faso is facing. We commend the Government of Burkina Faso for this timely initiative and hope that this is only a first step in a longer, fruitful partnership that will lead to fast results for the country's people.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome Mr. Alpha Barry, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, to today's meeting, and we thank Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, and the other briefers for the information they have given us.

We agree with the alarming views expressed today about the situation in the Sahel. The level of the threats to security in this part of Africa is now unprecedentedly

high. The geographic area of terrorist activity is expanding, and extremist ideology is continually gaining new adherents. We are very concerned about the attacks on religious shrines and other assaults by extremists and terrorists. The roots of these issues are well known, and Mr. Barry just discussed them. In the Sahel we are reaping the fruits of the collapse of statehood in Libya, which was the legacy of a crude foreign intervention. We believe that if the situation in that country is not normalized — and many of the people we talked to during the recent Security Council mission to Mali and Burkina Faso spoke about this — it will be impossible to reliably stabilize the region, practically speaking.

We welcomed the initiative of the States of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5) to create a Joint Force to combat terrorism and organized crime. It appears that in a relatively short period of time it has already become an important element in regional security. We were pleased with the information that as of January the Joint Force had resumed its operations in all its areas of responsibility, as well as the fact that its deployment levels have reached 75 per cent. Of course, there are still many unsolved problems. Last year's terrorist attack on the Joint Force headquarters revealed its weaknesses. As we understand it, the relevant conclusions have been drawn and work has been done to fix the mistakes. Of course, for the G-5 Joint Force to function fully, it has to ensure stable and predictable funding. We see that the funds promised by foreign donors are gradually reaching the region. However, many of those who pledged funds have not provided them in a timely manner. In principle, we are willing to consider the possibility of financing the Joint Force from the regular United Nations budget.

We believe it is very important for both Africans and the international community to take further coordinated steps aimed at combating terrorism in the Sahel-Saharan region. It is clearly impossible to eradicate this evil by military measures alone, and we also share the concerns of our friends from Equatorial Guinea about the excessive militarization of the region. It is essential to start effectively counteracting the expansion of extremist ideology, tackling the area's acute social and economic problems, strengthening State institutions and ensuring respect for human rights.

Russia is closely monitoring the developing situation in the region. We are already providing appropriate military-technical assistance in a number

of countries and training military and police personnel. In general, we hope that the G-5 Sahel Joint Force will become an effective tool for restoring and maintaining peace in West Africa in the very near future.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank you for convening today's meeting, Mr. President. We also want to thank the invited speakers for their briefings. We particularly welcome the presence here today of Mr. Alpha Barry, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Burkina Faso.

Peru has been following the fragile humanitarian and deteriorating security situations in the Sahel with concern, in spite of the valuable efforts of the Joint Force of the States of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), which we witnessed during our recent visit to Mali and Burkina Faso. In particular we firmly condemn the continuing terrorist attacks and spread of violent extremism. It is worrying that this crisis is spreading to other States outside the region such as Benin, Togo and Ghana, among others. We express our condolences to the families of the victims of recent attacks and to the countries affected, such as France, which lost two courageous soldiers. In that context, we stress the importance of redoubling our efforts in three areas that we believe to be fundamental to addressing this situation.

The first is security. The Joint Force plays a central role in the fight against terrorism, armed groups and transnational organized crime. We welcome the fact that the Joint Force resumed its activities at the beginning of this year and that the majority of its military and police components are deployed. However, we are concerned about the fact that there are still shortfalls in training, equipment and capacity-building, as well as limitations in the technical cooperation that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali is called on to provide. We reiterate the urgent need to ensure that the Joint Force has predictable, sustainable and flexible funding in order for it to fulfil its objectives. We also underscore how important it is that the G-5 Sahel countries remain committed to the establishment of a human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework, with a view to strengthening the confidence and support of the international community.

The second area is sustainable development. The Joint Force is part of a comprehensive and multidimensional strategy aimed at addressing the

root causes of the conflict. That means building and strengthening the capacities and institutions needed to defend human rights, promote the rule of law, counter the negative effects of climate change and drive sustained economic growth, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. We want to highlight the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and the G-5 Sahel Priority Investment Programme in that regard, as central elements in eliminating the structural obstacles to development, peace and security in the region. In that context, we emphasize the importance of promoting the empowerment of women and the creation of more job opportunities, particularly for young people, which has a direct impact on stability and development.

The third area is regional and subregional cooperation. We welcome the increased regional cooperation between the members of the G-5 Sahel and its neighbours with regard to information exchange and the fight against insecurity and the terrorist threat. We also emphasize cooperation with the various United Nations offices, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the Peacebuilding Fund. UNOWAS, in particular, offers a preventive and regional perspective, thanks to its effective coordination with the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and various regional organizations and United Nations entities.

In conclusion, we welcome the efforts of the G-5 Sahel as a strong manifestation of the potential and commitment of African countries to the promotion of peace and security on their continent. Peru will continue to support its efforts in all areas with the ultimate goal of consolidating sustainable peace in that region.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): At the outset, I would like to join other delegations in expressing our sincere condolences to the people of Burkina Faso and France and the families of the victims of the attack on a church in Dablo, as well as the families of the two fallen French soldiers.

I would also like to warmly welcome Mr. Alpha Barry, the current President of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). His presence today in the Chamber demonstrates the enormous importance he attaches to cooperation within the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to commend all the member countries

of the Joint Force — Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger — for their excellent regional cooperation, which should serve as an example for other regions of the world.

As a number of delegations and Assistant Secretary-General Bintou Keita have already described, the Sahel is facing some very diverse challenges, from climate change and irregular migration to trafficking in arms and drugs and violent extremism and terrorism. All of them have a transnational and transboundary character, which means that they can be effectively addressed only through international and regional cooperation. In that context, cooperation and coordination between neighbouring countries and within regional organizations, particularly African regional and subregional organizations, is crucial to achieving tangible and long-lasting progress in conflict resolution and stabilization efforts. In that regard, the G-5 Sahel Joint Force remains a critical part of a series of regional and international security responses addressing cross-border challenges in the Sahel region.

It goes without saying that Poland fully supports the mandate of the Joint Force and hopes that with the international community's necessary assistance it will soon be fully operationalized. To echo Mr. Barry's words, the G-5 Sahel Joint Force cannot fight alone. It needs the continued assistance of the Security Council, regional and subregional organizations and the European Union, as Mr. Buyoya highlighted. The European Union and Poland, as part of the European Union, are ready to stand with the Joint Force and to continue supporting its efforts to tackle its various challenges.

We also commend the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime — and we thank Mr. Fedotov for his very informative briefing — for its support to the operationalization of a police component for the Joint Force. The restoration of justice will play a fundamental role in securing peace and stability in the Sahel region, and its effectiveness will have an impact on the Joint Force's capacity to fight terrorism and transnational organized crime.

Furthermore, we welcome the continued commitment of the G-5 Sahel to establishing a human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework. As was highlighted by a number of delegations, as well as Ms. Keita and Mr. Delattre, respect for human rights is critical to gaining the trust of the local communities, which in turn is crucial to enhancing the effectiveness of

the anti-terrorist activities of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. That is why it is so important for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force to continue cooperating, in particular with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

It is of the utmost importance to focus priority training targets around the protection of civilians — which is one of Poland's priorities as a Security Council member — in order to prevent human rights violations and abuses committed by army and police components when conducting counter-terrorism operations.

Lasting peace, security and prosperity in the Sahel region cannot be achieved without major reforms. Underdevelopment, poverty, exclusion, poor governance, lack of access to basic services and economic opportunities and the effects of climate change in the region need to be addressed in line with the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel.

Therefore, there is a need to discuss how the international community can continue to support the G-5 Sahel and its Joint Force, through both bilateral and multilateral cooperation, to increase not only its operational capabilities, but also its development initiatives. If we wish to ensure long-standing peace, stability and prosperity, we need to address simultaneously three pillars: peace and security; development, as has already been mentioned by some speakers; and the pillar of human rights. That requires a creative approach focused on financial or material contributions, as well as on political and diplomatic cooperation. In that regard, we welcome the accelerated implementation of the G-5 Sahel Priority Investment Programme and the focus of development interventions on areas where the most vulnerable communities live.

Currently, Poland supports the G-5 Sahel Joint Force through both European Union channels and bilateral channels. We have provided the contingent of Chadian troops operating within the Force with significant material support. We need to look at support for the G-5 Sahel and its Joint Force from a broader perspective. It is most of all a long-term investment in regional security, which is a prerequisite for creating durable peace, security and prosperity in the Sahel region.

Finally, we commend Mr. Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali, and the personnel of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, who spare no

effort to ensure that the Mission stands ready to provide support to the Joint Force, in line with resolution 2391 (2017) and the technical agreement.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): I wish to thank His Excellency Mr. Alpha Barry, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Burkina Faso, for taking time to brief the Security Council on behalf of the presidency of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). I also thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Ms. Bintou Keita; the African Union (AU) High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, Mr. Pierre Buyoya; Mr. Angel Losada Fernández, European Union (EU) Special Representative for the Sahel; and Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director for United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for their comprehensive briefings.

South Africa takes note of the recent report of the Secretary-General (see S/2019/371) on the activities of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force and is deeply concerned about the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel region, particularly the continued terrorist attacks in northern and central Mali and Burkina Faso, as well as in the border regions of Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, and the increasing intercommunal violence, which has resulted in many fatalities. Of equal concern is the spill-over effect into wider West Africa.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to convey our condolences to the families and victims of the violent attacks in the Sahel, in particular those that took place in Ouagassou in Mali, Arbinda and, recently, in Dablo in Burkina Faso. We also convey our condolences for the two soldiers who sacrificed their lives so that their countrymen could go back and live in peace in their homeland. We are hopeful that the perpetrators of those heinous crimes will be held accountable. We commend the commitment expressed by the G-5 Sahel countries to establishing the human rights compliance framework. That is an important development that will go a long way towards bringing the perpetrators to justice and building the trust and confidence of the population in the justice systems of the respective countries.

We are encouraged by the concerted efforts and commitment of the countries of the Sahel to forge forward with the operationalization of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force to combat terrorism, cross-border organized crime and trafficking, in order to create conditions that are conducive to peace and development. Likewise, we welcome the resumption of the operations of the G-5

Sahel Joint Force at the beginning of this year to deal with the security challenges that have engulfed that region. South Africa recognizes the fundamental role and sacrifices of the AU-endorsed G-5 Sahel Joint Force and its member States. In that regard, we call upon the Security Council to spare no efforts in the support of the initiatives undertaken by the countries of the Sahel.

We welcome the unique partnership between the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the G-5 Sahel Joint Force to restore peace and stability in Mali and the wider Sahel region. As has been recognized by the Council, the partnership provides a positive model of cooperation between a United Nations peacekeeping operation and a regional peace operation in Africa. Therefore, every effort should be made by the Council and the international community to ensure that the challenges of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force are addressed and that it is fully capacitated and able to effectively implement its mandate.

We therefore reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's repeated recommendation to the Council concerning the establishment of a United Nations support office for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, funded through assessed contributions and independent of MINUSMA, which we believe will allow for the predictable and sustainable financing of support for the Joint Force, longer-term planning and the consolidation of this important initiative. That will enable the Force to have the necessary capacity and the critically needed logistical and operational base, which will contribute positively towards the full and effective operationalization of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force.

We are also of the view that if the Joint Force is to operate optimally, the necessary logistical requirements have to be provided. In that regard, South Africa endorses the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the Council consider authorizing MINUSMA to provide life-support consumables to battalions operating in the framework of the Joint Force, under the condition that the Joint Force or other partners undertake the responsibility of ensuring the delivery of support to their respective areas of operations.

In solidarity with Foreign Minister Barry and the people of Burkina Faso, South Africa also welcomes the plans to strengthen the office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and bolster humanitarian assistance, funding and programmes across Burkina

Faso. In addition, the Security Council should consider further opportunities to reinforce partnerships and strengthen the role of the African Union when discussing African-led peace operations. That process should be carried out in a well-coordinated manner in order for the partnerships to complement one another in support of the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel.

South Africa recognizes the nexus between security, peace and development. We believe that there is a need to also address the root causes of conflicts in the region, particularly poverty, climate change, unemployment and other related issues. Therefore, a holistic development approach to the challenges in the Sahel is urgently needed for the current efforts and initiatives to have a valuable lasting impact and bring about stability and durable peace in the region.

To our development partners, South Africa welcomes with appreciation the bilateral and multilateral financial contributions towards the G-5 Sahel's Priority Investment Programme, which focuses on socioeconomic development initiatives in the Sahel. At the same time, we urge all Member States in a position to do so to continue to provide financial support to ensure the successful implementation of the G-5 Sahel's Priority Investment Programme.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate that the G-5 Sahel Joint Force alone cannot secure the Sahel and that the Council should be mindful of the catastrophic ramifications of the security situation for the rest of the West African region now and Africa as a whole later on if the situation is not adequately and urgently addressed. That implies that no effort should be spared by the Council, the region and the international community to provide the necessary support the Joint Force urgently needs to succeed in its fundamental initiative.

South Africa will support the draft French press statement in that regard.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): May I, like others, start by extending sincere condolences to the Niger and France for the loss of their servicemen and servicewomen.

Let me also thank our briefers and welcome to the Council His Excellency Mr. Alpha Barry, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Burkina Faso.

As set out in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/371), there is some clear progress to be

welcomed, particularly the resumption of Joint Force operations from January and the deployment of 75 per cent of troops, as of March. We recognize the efforts of the States of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) to combat cross-border threats despite difficult and adverse circumstances. Now, the Force must accelerate its efforts to achieve full operational capacity and demonstrate that its security capacity is greater than the sum of its parts. Evidence of tangible results from its operations will build the Force's credibility, both regionally and internationally. To aid the Joint Force in overcoming the challenges it faces in terms of funding, and thereby achieving full operationalization, the United Kingdom strongly urges all partners to make good on the financial commitments they have made, with the utmost urgency.

On the United Kingdom's part, we have contributed to the European Union's package of support and provided further bilateral contributions, which for the Joint Force alone total approximately \$20 million. That is set against the far bigger contribution for the Sahel as a whole. Continuing the close cooperation with the European Union, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and Operation Barkhane is vital to aid operational efforts. In that regard, we welcome the creation in January of the Coordinating Body for Mali, which serves as a framework to enhance information-sharing and coordination among the various military and security forces present.

We also welcome the steps taken to advance the human rights compliance framework and strongly urge continued efforts to further embed and operationalize it across the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. That will not only lead to enhanced civilian protection but also support efforts to win the hearts and minds of the populations that the Joint Force was created to protect, which is crucial to the stabilization of the region. Any alleged human rights violations need to be fully investigated. Looking forward, we encourage the G-5 Sahel secretariat to finalize the Joint Force's strategic concept of operations, which will both demonstrate a unity of purpose within the Joint Force and boost donor confidence.

The challenges facing the Sahel region are becoming progressively more complex. With increasing incidents of terrorism, criminality and inter-community violence in Mali's central regions, we share the Secretary-General's concerns about the spread of insecurity and terrorism to other parts of the region, including into Burkina Faso. We call upon G-5 Sahel countries to

expedite their efforts to deploy all their outstanding troops and to fully establish the police component in order to address the growing transborder threat.

Military action alone is not the solution, as recognized by the Council in its December 2017 resolution 2391 (2017) in support of the G-5 Sahel Force. Long-term stability will be delivered to the region only if security efforts are accompanied by programmes to address governance, development, human rights and humanitarian issues.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to welcome Mr. Alpha Barry, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Burkina Faso, to the Security Council. I would also like to thank all briefers for their very interesting contributions.

I, too, would like to add my voice to the condolences extended to the Niger, Burkina Faso and France.

In 2014, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, the Niger and Chad decided to join forces against common challenges. Five years later, that ground-breaking initiative remains more relevant than ever. Belgium is in favour of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) being mandated under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. In addition, the Force must be able to rely on adequate and sustainable funding. That is why we also support, under well-defined conditions, funding the Force from mandatory United Nations contributions.

In the meantime, my country supports the operationalization of the Joint Force through the European Union, of course, but also bilaterally. Last year, Belgium contributed €1 million to ensure that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) could provide logistical support to the Joint Force. Belgium also supports the G-5 Sahel Defence College, to which it makes trainers available. In Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, Belgian soldiers provide training to their Sahelian comrades.

I would like to underscore the following point. The success of a regional security operation depends, to a large extent, on the existence of strong national armies. In that regard, in the context of Mali, we support the Secretary-General's call for comprehensive security sector reform.

In recent months, the Joint Force has undergone two positive developments that we must welcome: first, the relaunch of the Force's operations in January, and secondly, the gradual implementation of the compliance framework for human rights and international humanitarian law. We strongly encourage the G-5 Sahel States to pursue their efforts on both tracks.

Some equipment promised to the Force, however, has not yet been delivered, which has had an impact on operational planning. But other means exist, and they can be used now. The further implementation of the compliance framework; the development of the police component; the functioning of the permanent secretariat and the Defence and Security Committee; the updating of the concept of operations; and the establishment of a mechanism to coordinate international support, such as the follow-up group, are examples of areas where the G-5 Sahel can fully pursue its operationalization with the means already available.

Belgium is deeply concerned about the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel. As in all crises, the solution is primarily a political one, and the steps to be taken are manifold. A strong security response is, of course, essential to the dismantling of terrorist networks, the drying up of their sources of funding and the thwarting of their deadly narrative.

But the profound aspirations of the people and the various communities also deserve to be heard in order to avoid sliding into situations of violence. There is no magic formula, but there is a whole range of measures to be stepped up in terms of governance, the rule of law, the fight against corruption and impunity, respect for human rights, the fight against all forms of stigmatization of certain ethnic groups or communities, the provision of basic services and even adaptation to climate change.

In that respect, we must shed light on the events that took place in Boulékéssi and draw all the necessary conclusions from them on the judicial level. With regard to the situation in Burkina Faso, Belgium is closely following the efforts of the Secretary-General to redouble United Nations support, notably as penholders with our partner from Côte d'Ivoire, for the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel.

Belgium supports the tripartite arrangement among the G-5 Sahel, the European Union and the United Nations. We regret the underutilization of resources due not only to the absence of operations, but also

to the overly restrictive framework of conditionality imposed on MINUSMA. To echo the plea heard during our Council's mission to the country, Belgium urges the pragmatic adaptation of MINUSMA's support for the Joint Force. The enemies of peace recognize no borders.

Mr. Albanai (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we welcome the presence here today of His Excellency. Mr. Alpha Barry, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Burkina Faso. We would also like to express our thanks to all the briefers for their valuable remarks. It is pleasing to listen to the diverse group of speakers today representing different organizations and experiences, which gives us a better understanding of the situation in the Sahel region and helps us understand the different roles of actors in the region, as well as the needs of the Sahel region at large.

As has been made clear to the Security Council from the briefings today, there are issues that we can support to achieve stability and security, promote development and tackle the root causes of instability. I would like to address three main aspects of our discussion today: the efforts of the Joint Force, the security situation and the measures to be taken.

On the activities of the Joint Force, we welcome the resumption of its operations in January, particularly after the difficult situation that followed the attack on its headquarters last year. We also welcome its efforts to reach 75 per cent of operational capacity. We encourage the Joint Force to maintain that positive approach in order to confront the terrorist threats that are expanding in an unprecedented manner throughout the region. We also welcome the recent measures taken by the Joint Force to deploy a police component and operationalize the human rights compliance framework and investigate violations. Those issues are important for restoring trust among the people, which will in turn support the efforts of the Joint Force

We understand the difficulties faced by the Joint Force, particularly with regard to the lack of sustained funding to guarantee its continued operation. We welcome the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish a dedicated United Nations support office for the Joint Force. We must consider that proposal or other ways to identify how the Council can support the Joint Force, guarantee stability in the region and prevent the further spread of terrorism throughout the region.

With regard to the support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in

Mali to the Sahel Joint Force, we applaud the positive response of the Mission to all support requests from the Joint Force, in accordance with the technical agreement pursuant to resolution 2391 (2017). The resolution restricts support to Malian territories alone, which increases the pressure on the Joint Force.

On the security situation, we are deeply concerned about the increase of attacks in the region. There has been a rapid spread of violence in the Sahel region, from Burkina Faso to the coastal States of Benin, Togo, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. That highlights the importance of regional cooperation to address the threats in the region. The international community must support such cooperation in order to prevent the further expansion of terrorist activities.

In Mali, we have recently witnessed successful military operations by the military forces against terrorist groups, but they have not, unfortunately, improved the security situation. There have been increased incidents of violence during the recent period, the most important of which was the Ogossagou village massacre, which took place during the Security Council visit in March. In Burkina Faso, we heard closely from the Government during our visit about threats faced by the country. We understood that the threats in the region are similar and interconnected, and that addressing them in a coordinated and cooperative manner is therefore crucial. In this regard, I would like to join previous colleagues in expressing condolences to the friendly French Republic on the recent loss of two of its soldiers in Burkina Faso.

Lastly, in order to address the current situation in the Sahel region there are several issues that must be tackled, including the military and the development aspects. On the political process in Mali, the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali is important to the entire region, as noted by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2019/371) on the Joint Force. He notes that progress in the security sector in Mali would positively affect the operations of the Joint Force.

On the root causes of instability, we emphasize the need to achieve development throughout the region. The lack of economic opportunities, fragile governance and the impact of climate change, if not addressed, are but a few of the factors for instability and conflict.

We are pleased about the preliminary efforts of the G-5 States with respect to the Priority Investment

Programme, and the efforts of the United Nations through the implementation of its Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. Progress must be achieved in tandem with the military aspect of the G-5 Sahel in order to guarantee the achievement of comprehensive progress.

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

I would like to begin by welcoming His Excellency Mr. Alpha Barry, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Burkina Faso, to the Chamber and to thank him for his briefing on behalf of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). I would also like to thank all the briefers in today's meeting, who have provided us with a comprehensive overview. The variety of the briefers certainly represents the excellent cooperation among regional international organizations in working together to address the G-5 Sahel.

Let me start by paying tribute to the many peacekeepers on the ground and honouring those who have lost their lives in the fight to preserve peace and security in the Sahel region, including the two fallen French soldiers. Our condolences also go to all the innocent victims of the many terrorist attacks in the region.

I would like to focus on three pertinent points.

First, Indonesia supports the initiative and determination of the G-5 Sahel countries in addressing the security challenges that they faced through the establishment of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. The cooperation among Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger certainly serves as an excellent example of neighbouring countries working together to address a common cause.

As the report of the Secretary General (S/2019/371) suggests and Mr. Barry mentioned, there has been some encouraging progress, such as the deployment of 75 per cent of troops across three sectors, the resumption of operations of the Joint Force and the increase in civil-military cooperation activities. In addition, more efforts have been made in the deployment of police and civilian components, as well as the implementation of the human rights compliance framework. We hope that it will translate into real improvement in the overall security situation on the ground.

We are cognizant, however, that the Joint Force continues to work within a very difficult environment. Therefore, support is indeed important, including

predictable and sustainable funding, as well as training and capacity-building. In that regard, Indonesia commends the commitment of donors and calls for the disbursement of contributions pledged to support the Joint Force. As also outlined in the Secretary-General's report, future support options from the United Nations for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force should be further considered. Indonesia is of the view that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is playing an important role in supporting the G-5 Sahel Joint Force and that we should further consider what can be done to enhance that support, including when we discuss the renewal of MINUSMA's mandate.

Secondly, we remain concerned about the continuing deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel. The security situation in the Sahel remains precarious, with continued attacks by terrorists, including an attack on the G-5 Sahel Joint Force headquarters last year. There has also been an uptick in intercommunal violence. The persistent insecurity has resulted in heightened humanitarian needs and an increasing number of internally displaced persons and people suffering from malnutrition. The situation in the G-5 countries also has spillover effects on neighbouring countries in West Africa and impacts the overall stability of the region. There is therefore a need for comprehensive and multisectoral approaches to tackle the root causes of instability and build the resilience of the Sahelian people.

Thirdly, Indonesia believes that security initiatives should be part of broader efforts to ensure lasting stability in the Sahel, which also encompasses social

and economic development, as well as human rights aspects. It is important to win the hearts and minds of the population in addressing security challenges in the Sahel. We have always advocated for greater community engagement in that regard. In addition, good governance, addressing poverty and inequality, creating opportunities for young people and combatting climate change remain crucial to improving the living conditions of the Sahelian people.

We support the joint efforts of regional actors, the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations in the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel. We also appreciate the role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in supporting the Sahel region, as well as the accelerated implementation of the G-5 Sahel regional strategy and Priority Investment Programme, particularly for the most vulnerable. We also call on the international community to support efforts in the region so as to be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Indonesia stands ready to contribute and work with the international community to achieve lasting peace and stability in the Sahel, including through our peacekeepers serving in MINUSMA.

We look forward to the press statement to be issued by the French delegation.

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

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

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.