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Seventy-fourth year

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New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Lord Ahmad/Mr. Allen	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytsverve
	China	Mr. Zhang Jun
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Germany	Mr. Heusgen
	Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Peru	Mr. Ugarelli
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy/Mr. Repkin
	South Africa	Mr. Van Shalkwyk
	United States of America	Ms. Norman-Chalet

Agenda

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

The role of reconciliation in maintaining international peace and security

Letter dated 11 November 2019 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/871)

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

The role of reconciliation in maintaining international peace and security

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The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Georgia, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Viet Nam to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Alpaslan Özerdem, Dean of the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University; and Ms. Ilwad Elman, Director of Programs and Development, Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite His Excellency Mr. Silvio Gonzato, Deputy Head of Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

I propose that the Council invite the representative of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations to participate in the meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

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/2019/871, which contains a letter dated 11 November 2019 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

In that regard, I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: I thank the United Kingdom presidency for having convened this debate, as reconciliation processes supported by the international community can have a critical impact on the lives of the people we serve.

Successful reconciliation contributes to preventing a recurrence of conflict and to building more peaceful, resilient and prosperous societies, particularly in the aftermath of large-scale violence and human rights violations.

From Cambodia to Rwanda, Northern Ireland and Bosnia and Herzegovina, reconciliation processes have played a crucial role in resolving ethnic, religious and political differences and enabling people to live in peace. Reconciliation helps to repair fractures caused by an absence of trust between the State and the people, when institutions and individuals acknowledge their role in past crimes and both victims and perpetrators muster the courage to face the truth. It is a process through which societies can move from a divided past to a shared future.

Promoting reconciliation and breaking cycles of impunity are therefore integral to all our work. Resolutions adopted by the Council have guided us by stressing that reconciliation is part of a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace.

We all acknowledge the vital importance of reconciliation, but our concept of reconciliation must evolve to keep up with the changing nature of conflict. It can no longer be limited to those directly involved in waging war. Today's conflicts are complex and drawing in neighbouring countries and great Powers. Social, economic and political inequalities are growing and amplified by the climate crisis and new technologies. Democratic space is shrinking and stoking identity-based politics, discrimination, intolerance and hate speech. Today's reconciliation processes must respond

to those challenges by being broader, deeper and more inclusive than ever.

Reconciliation must have an impact at the individual, interpersonal, institutional and sociopolitical levels, if it is to succeed. There is growing awareness of the role of reconciliation in addressing the root causes of conflict, from the climate crisis to structural discrimination, inequality, impunity and the divisive narratives that play a part in radicalization and engendering violent extremism.

We are currently witnessing a wave of protests around the world. While every one is unique, they share some common features — a deficit in trust between people and political institutions, and the negative impacts of globalization and technological change that are deepening inequalities. I urge Governments to respond to those protests with respect for freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and to address people's grievances through dialogue and reconciliation to counter deep polarization.

We need a social contract that is inclusive and equitable; that enables everyone, including young people, to live in dignity; that affords women and girls the same opportunities as men and boys; and that protects those who are sick, vulnerable or living with a disability. Social and economic reform can play a central role in reconciliation, demonstrating the need to address corrupt practices and systems that serve the interests of a small elite. Today's reconciliation processes must fulfil two conditions.

First, they must be based within the communities and societies affected by conflict. Reconciliation must come from within, with the participation of all, not only political leaders and organizations. Women representatives and civil society groups must be included at every stage. Religious leaders have the moral authority to mobilize local support and build trust. Young people and marginalized groups are critical players with an inherent understanding of the grievances that lead to conflict. Peace agreements and reconciliation processes that ignore those voices are unlikely to succeed.

Local ownership and broad participation are also critical to overcome attempts by powerful elites to avoid accountability and exclude certain groups. Such manipulation can contribute to weak agreements that lack specific reforms and measures to bring communities back together. Successful reconciliation restores trust

in the State and its institutions. When people deem their institutions legitimate, they turn to them, rather than to violence, to address their differences.

Secondly, successful reconciliation processes address the pain and suffering of victims, understand the motivation of offenders, render justice, provide remedy and ensure truth. There is no reconciliation without justice, and there is no justice without truth. Transitional justice mechanisms, including truth and reconciliation commissions, can be an effective way to achieve these goals, as we have seen in Guatemala, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste and elsewhere. They can help societies unite around a shared narrative that affirms our common dignity and humanity

Reconciliation, however, cannot be a substitute for accountability or pave the way for amnesty for serious crimes under international law. The Council has rightly emphasized the importance of accountability for gross violations of human rights and humanitarian law. While rendering justice, successful reconciliation mechanisms must advance equality and human rights, even in cases in which those did not exist prior to conflict.

Human rights violations impact women differently. Transitional justice must be transformative justice that addresses gender imbalances, is rooted in local realities and is based on broad consultation.

(spoke in French)

The United Nations is working to integrate reconciliation frameworks into peacemaking and peacebuilding activities in countries throughout the world. Our mediators and envoys are emphasizing the importance of practical provisions that encompass the need for dialogue, confidence-building and reconciliation in peace agreements. We have also worked to include provisions that address the past in agreements mediated by regional organizations, including in the Central African Republic and South Sudan. In that context, I welcome the new transitional justice policy of the African Union, a framework that takes account of the complexities of mass violence, while at the same time respects local traditions involving reconciliation and justice.

We have always stressed the importance of transitional justice — notably in Colombia, as well as in other countries. We also provide technical support for national processes that contribute to collective healing, for example, in Tunisia and Yemen, where

we provide our expert advice to facilitate national dialogue. Throughout the world, the United Nations supports nationally led and victim-centred transitional justice processes. In the Gambia, for example, we have provided critical support in the development of the comprehensive national strategy for transitional justice and the establishment of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission.

We will continue to encourage Governments to make use of their national capacities, while ensuring respect for international norms. Our support for dialogue, consultations and political processes at the national level, including elections and drafting constitutions, is another crucial measure to promote people-centred and inclusive institutions.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is our road map for countering the drivers of conflict and promoting inclusive governance and respect for human rights and human dignity. The entire United Nations system is helping Governments to strengthen good governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, accountable institutions, the provision of basic services, gender equality and the inclusion of young people and marginalized communities in political processes.

Ultimately, reconciliation must be underpinned by key economic and political changes to the very institutions that gave rise to conflict or repression. Revisiting, understanding and overcoming a painful past together is extremely challenging. In the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu,

“There is no shortcut or simple prescription for healing the wounds and divisions of a society in the aftermath of sustained violence. Creating trust and understanding between former enemies is a supremely difficult challenge.”

Successful reconciliation is therefore both a goal and a process. As we near the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and the decade of action for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reconciliation based on establishing trust among peoples and nations is imperative to ensuring peace and prosperity for all on a healthy planet.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and insights into this issue.

I now give the floor to Mr. Özerdem.

Mr. Özerdem: I am honoured to be here with everyone today and grateful for the opportunity to address the Security Council. Allow me to express my sincere thanks to the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Her Excellency Ms. Karen Pierce, for her invitation for me to speak in this open debate on the issue of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is one of the main factors in gaining and sustaining peace. Allow me to spend a few moments sharing with the Council why reconciliation is so important for achieving lasting peace.

One of the tragic ironies of wars is that is that, when they come to an end, to achieve lasting peace, people on all sides must learn to live together. Victims, perpetrators and others in war-affected communities begin the formidable task of reconciling with one another, politically and interpersonally, reframing and rehumanizing their opposite numbers, rebuilding trust and accountability and coming to terms with legacies of the past.

Therefore, reconciliation is a process of restoring broken relationships, and has to engage deep-seated wounds of conflict. Reconciliation is also about learning to live non-violently with radical differences. However, post-conflict societies consist of large and disparate groups of actors with different experiences of the conflict and with different cultural codes and values. It is therefore unsurprising that the concept of reconciliation means different things to different people.

For parents whose children were taken in a raid, it might mean discovering what happened to them and seeing the perpetrators brought to justice. For newly installed national leaders, the emphasis might be on expedience, burying the past in order to focus on the urgent challenges of the present. For ex-combatants, reconciliation might be their ticket to forgiveness or a fresh start.

That is why reconciliation needs to be a tailor-made process, agile enough to adapt to changing socioeconomic and political post-conflict dynamics. In other words, from a minimalist perspective, reconciliation could be about achieving the objective of coexistence, whereas a maximalist approach emphasizes the importance of forgiveness, dealing with the past and rebuilding trust.

We should also remember that successful reconciliation is both an outcome and a process. As an

outcome, it consists of mutual trust, recognition and acceptance, as well as sensitivity and consideration for the other party's needs and interests. As a process, it would need to incorporate wide-ranging changes, both structural and psychological.

What have we learned from our reconciliation experiences over the years? First of all, reconciliation should be a transformational experience — not about learning how to forgive and forget, but how to remember and change. The rebuilding of Stari Most, the famous footbridge in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, could have been a great opportunity for such a transformational experience. Instead, the international community built an almost identical copy of the bridge, which was indeed a great success, but without giving Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks an opportunity to build bridges of trust during its reconstruction.

Secondly, reconciliation should always be based on local approaches, local vocabulary and, most important, local actors. Too often, however, their efforts are dismissed by political actors. Nevertheless, it is only through local approaches that we stand a chance to engage the deep emotional wounds left by conflict. Let us remember that emotions are not just private reactions, but also the basis of sociopolitical forces that are critical for the construction of identity and community. Therefore, it is important to consider reconciliation as a way of recasting the emotional legacies of conflict.

Thirdly, different dimensions of reconciliation — interpersonal, intergroup or inter-State — demand different types of engagement. Accordingly, we need to consider different types of local actors. Local authorities and municipalities, and their potential power as insider reconcilers, are often overlooked. For example, the city of Coventry in the United Kingdom, which was badly bombed during the Second World War, led an amazing mission of reconciliation and worked with the war-torn cities of iron curtain countries, such as Dresden, Belgrade and Warsaw, during the Cold War years. Let us recognize the bravery and foresight of insider reconcilers such as Provost Howard, who, immediately following the bombing of Coventry Cathedral, called for reconciliation rather than revenge.

Fourthly, financial support and projects become helpful only when they are part of a larger, locally designed and led process. The United Nations and its

Member States have to increase funding, but must also make it more flexible. Effective reconciliation requires agility to react to changing situations and longevity, which project cycles rarely enable. That is particularly important to ensure the full participation of women and young people, as they tend to be excluded and marginalized in wider peacebuilding processes. Without women and young people, reconciliation can never be successful.

Fifthly, it is important to remember that launching a truth and reconciliation commission is not enough, although it is often necessary to address past injustices and establish what happened. Different attempts at reconciliation — whether they focus on truth finding, reparations, education, peace journalism, addressing past grievances or writing a common history — should all be interlinked and connected to the wider socioeconomic and political realities of post-conflict societies. Let us not forget that reconciliation is a process, not just a programme.

Finally, we must not think that reconciliation happens only after violent conflict. It needs to happen all the time and everywhere — sometimes even as the first option to achieve peace. In today's world many societies are deeply divided along religious, political, ethnic, racial or economic fault lines. Our politics are divisive. Therefore, we need to reduce prejudices, challenge stereotypes and tackle dehumanization. We need to support everyday peace and reconciliation. Our activities as politicians, diplomats, civil society workers, academics, the media and the private sector should engender trust, compromise and cooperation.

Reconciliation matters because if individual and collective traumas are not addressed, residual grievances can provide a basis for self-perpetuating cycles of violence among future generations. For divided societies to heal and come together, we need strategies in place that enable us to negotiate past grievances, and allow us to reflect upon how memories and emotions force the past to become the politics of the present.

Designing effective reconciliation requires the involvement of relevant local actors, particularly women and young people. As members of the international community, we should faithfully support the processes that we help to design.

Faith can be a significant inspiration for reconciliation, but its manipulation can also lead to further division, hatred or violence. Like all other

actors, faith actors need to be scrutinized according to their actions, and that is what research, monitoring impact and evaluation help to accomplish.

Reconciliation can be effective only when it is deeply contextual. Sometimes the traditions that heal relationships may, unfortunately, need to be revitalized. That is where knowledge of local actors is critical, and building networks of actors and good practices could inspire others.

At the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, and its newly founded Mary Hoch Center for Reconciliation, we undertake research on locally led reconciliation practices. With a specific focus on insider reconcilers, we facilitate collaboration among scholars and practitioners, examining how faith and indigenous narratives mitigate conflicts and heal community relationships. We remain available to assist the United Nations in its mission to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 16, on peace, justice and strong institutions.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Elman.

Ms. Elman: I am grateful for the invitation to brief the Security Council this morning.

I am from Somalia, a State that collapsed devastatingly in 1991 and remains somewhat trapped in a spiral of prolonged violent anarchy and warfare to this day. The first attempt at reconciliation was actually at the height of the conflict in 1991. During the early days of the war, a manifesto was produced and was supported by many of the rebel leaders. However, since not all of the rebel leaders were signatories, the process failed. Since then, countless attempts at ending the conflict and building peace humanitarian initiated and continue to this very day.

Somalia, as an example of a country in a protracted conflict, is certainly not unique. Past efforts in my country, which proceeded from the assumption that political and diplomatic methods could be grafted unto existing systems and attitudes, without first developing new social and economic foundations for change, were part of an unfortunate norm in the crises and conflicts the Council and member States are committed to solving. It therefore gives me encouragement that, under the United Kingdom's presidency, we are now

debating the toughest and, arguably, most important part of the peacebuilding cycle — reconciliation.

I am reminded of a terrible clash between forces loyal to Galmudug and Puntland forces in Somalia, in the city of Galkayo, where I was doing some work recently on disarmament programmes. Fifty thousand people were displaced. There were many civilian casualties and countless militias, armed to the teeth, were stationed at the front lines of a city whose border was literally divided by just a single rope. The international community stepped in immediately to de-escalate the tensions and the leaders of the two regions were taken out of Somalia for peace talks. The signing of the agreement was celebrated abroad and echoed in national media. The very day the leaders returned, devastating fighting erupted once more, leaving more innocent people dead.

Yet, when the women, young people and religious leaders of that very community are asked what it would take for the young men on the front lines to drop their weapons, the answer is simple — just talk to them. They are accessible. If offered a chance at peace, those with the most to lose will participate. We know that a reconciliation process that almost exclusively involves political parties, with voters often left out of the talks, will most likely not succeed. We know that to achieve true reconciliation, the process must embrace a long-term, nationwide solution. The most urgent task is often rebuilding public trust in institutions — formal and informal alike. Such trust is worryingly lacking in the conflicts we hope to solve today.

Violence will continue to ensue if people no longer believe that they can solve their problems through trusted channels, such as Government institutions. Reconciliation is a process; it is not a single event and it cannot be a process that is exported outside of the country. I witnessed at first-hand every day what the lack of a legal framework for reconciliation means. It means the absence of certainty for potential defectors from the parties to the conflict regarding the fate they expect if they risk their lives to escape from groups like Al-Shabaab, for example; the impact of high corruption and the lack of adherence to international human rights laws by Somali Government institutions; the lack of parallel efforts to disarm and transform clan militias; persistent clan conflicts and discrimination and the country's prevalent politics of exclusion and marginalization. Such problems permeate traditional justice mechanisms. In addition, the biased treatment

of women and discrimination against minority clans perpetuate grievances. Yet, efforts at trauma healing, forgiveness and reconciliation among former combatants, local communities and clans have been led for years by Somali non-governmental organizations.

Successful strategies for peacebuilding and national reconciliation must involve as many sectors of the population as possible. Most important, such strategies must seek to build consensus. Women-led civil society groups all over the world that are able to speak to the underlying drivers of violence and significantly influence the reconciliation process are systematically excluded. There are countless examples of women's peace and reconciliation efforts, in Somalia, Northern Ireland, Liberia, the Balkans, Bosnia and more. The evidence speaks for itself.

After 20 years of celebrating resolution 1325 (2000), I urge the Council to not just symbolically celebrate the document but to utilize it to advance women's inclusion in adjusting the challenges to reconciliation and mandate that there is inclusive gender decision-making in the design, implementation and monitoring of reconciliation strategies. That means consulting women from the beginning, including those that are displaced and with disabilities; taking the steps necessary to increase the number of female staff in mediation, observation and the negotiation of peace agreements; and adjusting the protection needs of all humanitarian workers and women human rights defenders, who are increasingly targeted, disappeared and abducted for getting involved in those very processes. Although women, in particular young women, are more likely to become victims during war, they have created pathways to peace through advocacy and informal networks and, with new technology, have even created viral movements.

However, the lack of financial assistance to complement peacemaking and the culture of human rights is one of the biggest setbacks for peacebuilding today. Outside of my work with the Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre in Somalia, where I focus on the disarmament, rehabilitation and reintegration of young men and women who are involved with armed groups, I also have the extreme honour of serving as an adviser to the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund — a testament to his commitment to including women, in particular young women, and those from the Global South in decision-making processes in peacebuilding. In that process and through such work, we have

countless times heard from the people of fragile States and countries in conflict, directly appealing for more support for reconciliation. That is the reason those countries request funding.

I leave Council members with a thought and a request that the President and the members of the Council consider working with the mechanisms that exist within the United Nations family today. The Peacebuilding Fund, with the Council's support, can invest in reconciliation in the countries we are discussing.

The President: I thank Ms. Elman for her very powerful briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

On behalf of the Government of the United Kingdom and as current Council President, I would like first to thank everyone for joining us today and sharing thoughts on this important issue. In particular, I thank Mr. Özerdem and, of course, Ms. Elman for their very powerful, touching and poignant contributions. I also pay tribute to the contribution of Secretary-General António Guterres. His words resonated very strongly, in particular when he spoke of no reconciliation without justice and no justice without truth. That should remain our primary aim and objective.

We all recognize that reconciliation is an important, indeed pivotal, block for lasting peace. Why? Because it has the power not only to resolve existing conflicts but also to prevent future violence, by helping people and communities overcome old grievances. That is why the United Kingdom is and will remain a steadfast champion of the Secretary-General's vision for sustaining peace, which puts conflict prevention and peacebuilding at the very heart of the important work of the United Nations around the world.

It is also why we, the United Kingdom, along with other nations, have long advocated for faith leaders to play a key role. When we look around the world today — a world where more than three-quarters of people say directly that their faith is important to them — there can be very little doubt that faith leaders have the ability to influence individuals and communities in a way that Governments simply cannot. Faith is part of the solution. Faith leaders can also amplify the voices of

vulnerable communities and support reconciliation and peacebuilding by mediating and encouraging dialogue among different groups. As Mr. Özerdem said, we must also remember the causes of the conflict and then move forward and change.

The United Kingdom and I, personally, as the Minister who oversees human rights, have been focused regularly on seeking insights from faith and belief leaders around the world, not only to seek their support but to directly inform policy and our work on finding practical, workable and, more important, sustainable solutions.

I would emphasize that it is also important to get one's own house in order. We should reflect. Never is the job done. We should constantly evolve as Governments ourselves. This year, therefore, we asked the Bishop of Truro to look at our response to the persecution of Christians around the world as well as of members of other religious minorities — Muslim minorities, including Ahmadi and Shia Muslims, and members of the Baha'i faith, to name but a few.

We are proud of both the honesty and the transparency shown during this process, as we are of the important priority we are giving our global campaign in support of media freedom. It was Thomas Jefferson who said, "The liberty of speaking and writing guards our other liberties." That is why the United Kingdom, together with our partners around the world, is also seeking to defend media freedom and protect journalists who do an incredible job, often with great danger to themselves. We support this campaign because it is as important as working with religious communities to defend their religious freedom and protect the persecuted.

Accordingly, as a Government, we have already accepted all of the wide-ranging recommendations set forth in the Bishop of Truro's review, including establishing an early-warning system to accelerate our response to atrocities. As I look around the Security Council table this morning, we will be seeking a Security Council resolution on the persecution of Christians and of people of all faiths. We hope that today's debate will prepare the ground and inform later discussions on this important priority.

With regard to justice, we have seen how transitional justice mechanisms can support persecuted people and lay the foundations for peace. For these mechanisms to be successful, they must involve, as Ms. Elman said, all

parts of the community, particularly women. The United Kingdom has been and will remain a steadfast advocate for engaging and involving women at the heart of conflict resolution, not as an afterthought, but because we believe they can be pivotal players in ensuring that peace is achieved and sustained and that countries and nations can build. It is also important to involve women to ensure that children's views are represented effectively. Faith, belief and community leaders also need to be involved. Indeed, all voices should be heard as we look towards building justice. This inclusiveness is vital, but our efforts must of course be tailored to the country concerned.

Mr. Özerdem talked about local ownership. We have seen that in certain areas of the world. The Gambia has shown one possible model. It secured the confidence of the public by establishing a truth, reconciliation and reparations commission that was seen to be independent, consultative and inclusive. Similarly, accountability is another important element for long-term reconciliation. Impunity must no longer be the default option. That is why the United Kingdom has supported the established United Nations policy to oppose amnesties for war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide or gross violations of human rights, including in the context of peace negotiations.

And what about the Security Council? The Council has a pivotal and key role to play, working with the Secretary-General and his Offices — for mediation and support, special political missions, the Peacebuilding Commission and others. As countries make the transition from conflict and instability to sustainable peace and security, all of us on the Security Council have a particular responsibility to ensure that their efforts succeed. That means monitoring reconciliation processes, women mediators, deciding when to deploy special political missions, and ensuring that women and other excluded groups have a place at the very heart of the table at every stage of recovery and reconciliation. It is also important that we should consider how faith leaders can support our efforts in this regard.

In conclusion, I thank the Secretary-General, our briefers and all participants from whom we will hear today for their continued commitment in support of reconciliation that is fair, inclusive and effective. After all, we owe it to all those who have suffered from conflict and to those who continue to suffer to help them overcome their differences and return to their

homes and communities. Ultimately, we all need to play our part in building a lasting peace.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, it is a pleasure to have you with us in the Security Council today. We would thank you, Sir, for the presiding over this debate, and thank the Secretary-General and the briefers for orienting us with their experiences and recommendations.

Reconciliation plays an important role in the processes of building and sustaining peace. In order to achieve long-term success in reconciliation efforts, we must prioritize the rebuilding of the rule of law and the strengthening of State institutions, as well as the confidence of those affected by conflict with those institutions. Otherwise, it becomes impossible to guarantee security, with impunity remaining the rule and economic activities being severely disrupted. We therefore insist that ending the climate of impunity is vital to restoring confidence, including through the prosecution of perpetrators of violence and by providing the due reparation to the victims of the conflict.

Brutal memories of past abuses take years to heal. In order to sow the seeds of reconciliation, it is therefore necessary to use the potential of educational institutions in their role as centres of social cohesion, reconciliation and belonging when they promote understanding and recognition of diversity.

We must further channel reconciliation efforts into the programmatic work of United Nations agencies, considering that they have vast experience and such tools as impartiality and neutrality to contribute to reconciliation. In peacebuilding and reconciliation processes, we often pay attention to parties to conflicts and forget those affected by them. Women, for example, have taken on an important role in reconciliation processes in Colombia, Guatemala, Liberia, Northern Ireland and the Philippines, just to mention a few. It is clear that the inclusion of women contributes to a holistic understanding of what reconciliation requires, increasing the chances of success.

I would like at this point to acknowledge the work of Ms. Ilwad Elman and underline the excellent work

that has been done by young people in this area with the following three points.

First, youth, including young women, must be involved as stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of transitional justice processes, including truth-seeking, reparation and reconciliation programmes.

Secondly, young people serve as a fabric for integrating the commitments assumed in peace agreements and processes, being natural transmitters of historical memory so that future generations may learn from conflict thereby ensuring long-term sustainability.

Thirdly, young people should be recognized for their key role in the raising of awareness and understanding of the dynamics of conflict within their countries and promoting the urgency of rebuilding relationships among marginalized communities. As an example, the Dialogue for the Future initiative developed under the auspices of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and implemented in conjunction with United Nations agencies, the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro, is a concrete example of a project that creates more spaces for constructive dialogue among various communities and leaders at the highest level, alongside young people.

The social capital of young people must be seriously taken into consideration in peacebuilding processes. We call on Governments, regional organizations, United Nations country teams, peacekeeping and political missions and stakeholders to involve young people in political dialogue and formal and informal reconciliation processes so as to ensure that their participation be structured and systematic.

Mr. Van Shalkwyk (South Africa): It is a pleasure to see you here with us again, Mr. President, and we thank you once more for your generosity and having hosted us last night — we really appreciate that.

I wish to begin by thanking the Secretary-General, Mr. Özerdem and Ms. Elman for their briefings on this very important topic on the role and value of reconciliation in the maintenance of international peace and security. South Africa recognizes and values the importance of national reconciliation processes in achieving sustainable peace, especially in countries transitioning from conflict to post-conflict situations.

As the Security Council will be aware, South Africa went through its own process of reconciliation after having dismantled the oppressive system of

apartheid. Our Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established with the aims of granting amnesty from criminal and civil liability to people who made full disclosures of acts committed with a political objective during the course of conflicts of the past; affording victims an opportunity to relate the violations they suffered; taking measures aimed at granting reparations to victims; restoring the human and civil dignity of the victims of human rights violations; and making recommendations aimed at preventing the committing of gross human rights violations. Many South Africans had an opportunity to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in a series of public hearings, either as victims or as perpetrators of acts that had violated human rights. State institutions, political parties, organizations and the business sector were also required to elaborate on their respective roles in the past.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission had to deal with the question of reconciliation and the future, on the one hand, and the necessity to establish the truth in relation to past events and ensure reparations to the victims of gross human rights abuses, on the other hand. Those issues had to be carefully considered and balanced, both during and after the historic transition from apartheid and oppression to a constitutional democracy. The compromises were sometimes painful, as was confronting the truth of past oppression. However, for us, based on our own national circumstances and history, it was our way of reconciling the decades-long oppression and proceed with nation-building.

Reconciliation measures during transitions from post-conflict situations are crucial to ensuring long-term stability. However, it is equally important to realize that one size does not fit all. Transitional justice processes must respond to the specific context of the country in transition. The creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in our country was the manner in which we chose to deal with our own past and future. Countries emerging from conflict must find their own ways of bridging the past with new possibilities for the future in the context of their own unique circumstances.

The debate on peace and justice still continues, and each State needs to take broad ownership of its particular transitional processes and find its own balance in the sequencing of peace, justice and reconciliation. While human rights norms have strengthened transitional justice, and although that

has become an acceptable response during political transitions, they have also shaped the transition process into a largely legalistic field with an often-narrow accountability and justice-based focus. It is also necessary to consider that there is a political necessity to promote alternative means of accountability. Focusing on prosecutions alone can destabilize transitions. Therefore, the whole spectrum of transitional justice needs to be explored, including truth commissions and reparations for victims. In addition, it is important to recognize the value and importance of community-based or traditional justice mechanisms, whereby local conflict-resolution and healing practices are adapted to address grave violations. Equally important are efforts to ensure the representation of women and youth, not only in transitional justice processes but also at the negotiating table beforehand.

As Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, has written,

“The establishment of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a pioneering international experiment, with a potentially far-reaching effect on the way we all deal with conflict. Normally, when countries move through the difficult transition from oppression to democracy, they deal with the past in one of two ways: either the leaders of the old order are put on trial or dealt with summarily, or previous events are swept under the carpet and the suffering of those subjected to violence is ignored. South Africa followed a third, unique way when it ended apartheid. To those who had committed grave violations of human rights, it offered amnesty in exchange for public disclosure of the truth about their crimes, and to the victims it gave an unusual opportunity to be heard, as well as hope for reparations.”

The international community, and the United Nations in particular, has an important role to play in creating an enabling environment in which reconciliation can occur. Durable peace cannot be achieved simply through the signing of peace agreements. It also requires a comprehensive approach that involves the active participation of the broader multilateral system in addressing peace and security and sustainable development needs. As in peacekeeping operations, different situations require different responses in dealing with post-conflict reconciliation and development.

On our continent, the African Union seeks durable peace and sustainable development through the mechanisms and structures it has put in place for conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace support operations and intervention, as well as peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. It is important to strengthen the linkages between regional and global mechanisms if we want to ensure that the United Nations system, and in particular the Security Council, is able to help establish enabling environments in countries plagued by conflict and in order to support nationally owned reconciliation processes and bring about sustainable peace and security.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to welcome your presiding over this meeting, Sir, and thank you for having organized it. We are also grateful for the concept note (S/2019/871, annex) provided. We also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing, as well as Mr. Özerdem and Ms. Elman for their remarks.

The Security Council has held many thematic debates over the past 10 years on the importance of preventive diplomacy tools such as mediation in conflict resolution. Today we are focusing on reconciliation, which is a vital element in achieving the peaceful coexistence of communities, especially in post-conflict situations. There are a number of prerequisites for reconciliation to succeed, as detailed by the Secretary-General and the two briefers in their statements. The Security Council must pay more attention to this topic in order to prevent relapse into conflict. That should be done not only through holding discussions on the issue but also by taking measures to ensure implementation on the ground.

Reconciliation is one of the most important elements and phases of the comprehensive approach to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and it is a key and vital factor to ensure sustainable peace. The success of reconciliation is contingent upon several other accompanying elements, including accountability and transitional justice, namely, to ensure that those who are guilty do not enjoy impunity and to ensure respect for human rights and international humanitarian law; and rehabilitation, reintegration and disarmament. With regard to victims, we must provide the necessary support to ensure their full rehabilitation. We reaffirm the importance of national ownership of any reconciliation process. We must establish integrated strategies of reconciliation supported by

confidence-building measures among all relevant parties. Dialogue requires sacrifices, compromise and flexibility, as well as leaving the past behind, healing wounds and making progress in a spirit of optimism and serious political will.

The United Nations has many tools at its disposal that enable it to play an important role in reconciliation processes. Peacekeeping operations are among the most important tools and have been playing such an essential role since 1948. Peacekeeping operations have enjoyed successes in a number of States and encountered challenges in others. Moreover, the Special Envoys and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General bear the responsibility for paving the way towards launching a dialogue that would lead to a successful reconciliation

We must also highlight the role of the Peacebuilding Commission, which often plays a key and vital part in such processes by providing advice and integrated strategic recommendations for peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery, in particular in the case of country-specific configurations. In addition, we must help to ensure reliable funding for early recovery activities and sustainable financial resources in the medium and long terms, especially through the Commission's close cooperation with the Peacebuilding Fund. We should not forget that some States play an important role in laying the foundation for reconciliation. It is very important that the United Nations establish partnerships with those States and cooperate with regional and subregional organizations that sponsor specific reconciliation process.

Reconciliation must be inclusive. In negotiations, we must not ignore the needs and concerns of women, young people, refugees and internally displaced persons. We must also bear in mind the significant role that women can play in all stages of peacebuilding and their contributions to putting forward and implementing reconciliation strategies. In addition, we must acknowledge that there is not one reconciliation model. Rather, every situation has its own characteristics depending on the nature of the conflict in question and the historic, cultural, social and economic dimensions related to the outbreak of that conflict.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that reconciliation is a complex and long-term process. However, if successful, it can put an end to bloodshed and prevent further destruction and loss. Such reconciliation processes require the ongoing support of the United Nations

and the international community and the participation of civil society and the mass media. We emphasize the importance of establishing an awareness-raising media strategy that encourages members of society to overcome conflict and to achieve peaceful coexistence. That is indispensable in today's world. As we discuss the process of reconciliation, we look forward to the signing of national reconciliation and peace agreements in all hotbeds of conflict on the agenda of the Security Council — Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan and other conflict areas — and to putting an end to the tragic conflict phase, offering hope for reconstruction and the building of a better future for our peoples.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes you, Mr. Minister, to New York and would like to thank you for presiding over today's meeting. I thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing. China has listened carefully to the statements by Mr. Özerdem and civil society representative Ms. Elman.

The Security Council bears the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Thanks to the efforts of all parties and the support of the international community, the United Nations and the Security Council have made unstinting efforts to maintain regional stability and promote international peace and security. Positive results have been achieved.

That said, there are many issues that merit further consideration, including how to sustain and consolidate peace. Achieving reconciliation is an important element in ending conflicts and promoting lasting peace and stability. If the parties concerned do not resolve their differences and give up past grievances, peace will not be truly sustainable and conflict may break out again. Achieving national or intercommunal reconciliation requires the joint efforts of all the parties as well as the support and assistance of the international community, in particular the United Nations. I wish to emphasize the following points.

First, respect for national sovereignty is the primary prerequisite for reconciliation. Countries differ in terms of their national characteristics, judicial systems and culture. There is no one-size-fits-all reconciliation process. The support and assistance of the international community must therefore be based on respect for national sovereignty and ownership, as well as independence, unity and territorial integrity. The countries concerned must be supported in advancing a

reconciliation process that meets its national conditions. A bold guest overshadowing the host or imposing external plans must be avoided in that regard. No one should be the judge or the teacher.

Secondly, dialogue and consultations are the only way to achieve reconciliation. With international and regional hotspot issues appearing one after the other, China supports peaceful means such as dialogue and negotiation to resolve international disputes and hotspot issues. The parties concerned must remain committed to frank and in-depth dialogue so as to enhance mutual trust and reduce mistrust. They must refrain from needlessly resorting to the threat or use of force. It is essential to embrace the vision of a shared future, resolve disputes through dialogue, settle differences through consultations, promote security cooperation and respect and address each other's legitimate concerns so as to achieve reconciliation and peace.

Thirdly, good offices and mediation are significant means for achieving reconciliation. Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations should be fully leveraged regarding the good offices and mediation roles of the Organization. The authority of the Security Council must be safeguarded and the role of regional and subregional organizations must be fully utilized. The peaceful settlement of disputes through, *inter alia*, dialogue, negotiation, mediation and good offices must be supported. The international community must remain objective and impartial, play a constructive role in facilitating peace talks in order to find a proper solution to regional conflicts and promote national reconciliation with a view to de-escalating and, ultimately, resolving hotspot issues. All United Nations agencies must discharge their duties as mandated, strengthen coordination and ensure synergy.

Fourthly, sustainable development is a fundamental strategy for reconciliation. Development is the key to all issues. Secretary-General Guterres has said on many occasions that sustainable and inclusive development is an effective solution to the root causes of conflict. Most international and regional hotspot issues are the result of poverty and underdevelopment. The way out is therefore sustainable development. It is vital to pay equal attention to development and peace, achieve peace through development, facilitate development through peace, address both the symptoms and the root causes of conflicts and lay a solid basis for sustainable reconciliation and peace by strengthening development capacities.

President Xi Jinping has said that the world in which we live is full of hopes and challenges. We must not give up our dreams just because the reality is complex or stop pursuing our goals just because they are remote. China was the first country to sign the Charter of the United Nations. In a world with constant challenges and increasing risks, as a founding member of the United Nations and a permanent member of the Security Council, China will always support peace and justice, actively explore and implement solutions with Chinese characteristics to hotspot issues, play a constructive role in striving for reconciliation and mutual trust among parties and contribute to building a world of lasting peace and universal security.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): The theme of reconciliation is of great relevance to Germany. That is also because of our past. Mr. Özerdem mentioned a small part of our past by talking about the relationship there is today between Coventry and Dresden. But it is not only due to our past but also because we deeply believe that reconciliation is a very important element in the conflict cycle. In Germany, we have just published a strategy to support dealing with the past and reconciliation, in particular transitional justice.

I wish to echo what the Secretary-General said at the very beginning of his briefing with regard to the fact that reconciliation is an important mechanism for prevention. Reconciliation is a crucial step for countries entering the post-conflict phase. Only successful and inclusive reconciliation can ensure peace in the long term.

Again, to quote the Secretary-General, but also you, Lord Ahmad, there is no reconciliation without justice, no justice without truth. It is absolutely crucial that we fight impunity in our efforts towards reconciliation. Holding those who are individually responsible for atrocities and human rights violations accountable under criminal law is a key prerequisite for sustaining peace. As the Secretary-General has said, we have to break the cycle of impunity. That is why, during the high-level week of the General Assembly, Germany called on partners to work together in an alliance against impunity with a view to giving renewed impetus to the international criminal justice system. It is also why we support the international mechanisms to assist in the investigation and prosecution of crimes, such as the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria, the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar and the United Nations Investigative Team

to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh (UNITAD).

We have had this discussion before with regard to Syria. Germany firmly believes that the crimes and atrocities committed on all sides during the Syrian conflict must be investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice. That is the only way to achieve reconciliation. For that reason, German prosecutors will continue to investigate possible war crimes committed in Syria and we will continue to support the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria. I take advantage of this occasion to again appeal to everyone to support the budget for the Mechanism in the Fifth Committee. We also welcome the work of UNITAD in Iraq and the extension of its important mandate. We support UNITAD financially and through a secondment and look forward to extending the productive exchange between UNITAD and our prosecutors.

From our perspective, certain elements are important for reconciliation to be successful. Based on all the statements, I think we all agree that we first need local solutions tailored to specific contexts. Such solutions were referred to as tailor-made processes by Mr. Özerdem and as idiosyncratic approaches by our colleague Mr. Alotaibi. Mr. Özerdem also referred to a concrete example that I like very much, namely, the Mostar Bridge, which was reconstructed. It is fantastic to see, but the local communities still have not really reconciled. Therefore, civil society and local organizations must be included. The local population must be in the driver's seat in terms of designing and implementing reconciliation approaches. Germany has tried to do that in concrete cases. For instance, we support an inclusive transitional justice process in Mali.

National sovereignty is discussed over and over in the Council. Yes, national sovereignty should be respected but, as mentioned by our colleague from China, within the limits imposed by the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. National ownership can be guaranteed only by including everyone, especially marginalized groups and civil society, and by promoting and protecting the human rights of all.

The inclusion of women is a theme that ran through almost all the interventions. Germany believes that it is crucial for a gender perspective to be reflected throughout the whole reconciliation process. Women's leadership and participation are necessary for the

success of transitional justice. We say that all the time, but we have to implement it. It cannot be as in the talks on Afghanistan, where one side is represented by men only. We have to have women, and I think we should all commit to not entering into any negotiations where one side is represented by men only. We have a rule at the German mission whereby no panel can go ahead without a woman present. I think that should apply to negotiations as well.

With regard to national solutions, reconciliation on the local level must be embedded in a broader national discourse. Policies for social reconciliation need to include long-term nationwide solutions. Ms. Elman gave the example of her own country and how important it is that everyone have certainty, that there be trust in Government institutions and that there be good governance and no corruption.

We provide concrete support for efforts we believe are successful. I listened carefully to what Mr. Van Shalkwyk said about South Africa. The Security Council travelled to Colombia, where very good solutions were found in the form of special courts for peace, a truth commission and units for the search for missing persons, which we support. We also support the Joint United Nations Development Programme-Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention through peace and development advisers, who have proven very adept at supporting reconciliation processes.

As for our support for the United Nations tool box, we want to sharpen the Security Council's focus on conflict prevention. We think that we should look more often at emerging conflicts and believe that reconciliation and mediation capacities must be included more often in mission mandates. We also believe that, as mentioned by Ms. Elman, the Peacebuilding Commission plays a crucial role in conflict situations and prevention efforts. It also provides a platform for cooperation, exchange and sharing lessons learned. Therefore, the Commission should be used more frequently in the Council.

My last point is that Germany is proud to be the largest donor to the Peacebuilding Fund and invites others to join forces and to do even more.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buyswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I am grateful for the holding of this debate. Allow me to thank the Secretary-General and the briefers for their interventions.

As the Secretary-General said, quoting Desmond Tutu,

“There is no handy road map for reconciliation. There is no shortcut or simple prescription for healing the wounds and divisions of a society in the aftermath of sustained violence.”

Creating trust and an environment that fosters mutual respect and resilience in the face of intolerance is an extremely difficult challenge. However, it is essential to promoting lasting peace and restoring the social fabric. Examining a painful past, acknowledging and understanding it and, above all, transcending it together is the best way to ensure that it does not happen again. Transitional justice processes, we believe, can contribute to that.

Reconciliation is an issue that has affected us all at different times. My own country began a process of reconciliation after the two World Wars that has repercussions to this day. Reconciliation is a complex exercise, and there is no single formula for it. However, history shows us that reconciliation is indeed possible.

Each society must find its own way to reconciliation. It involves a very long and painful process, which must respond to the pain and suffering of victims, understand the motivations of those who have violated the rights of others, bring divided communities closer together and seek to find the path to justice, truth and, ultimately, peace. A series of measures can be taken in the short, medium and long terms to achieve that, and each country emerging from conflict must strive to find the right combination of measures to prevent new conflicts. For, as many have said this morning, reconciliation is the best way to achieve prevention. Some factors can increase the chances of success in reconciliation processes. Let me mention three of them.

First, a victim-centred approach must be taken to reconciliation. Victims often demand recognition of what they have been subjected to, and even some form of reparation; those elements can complement the action of the criminal justice system. Such an approach must necessarily take into account the local and human dimensions of conflicts. For example, as part of the peace agreement in Colombia, a large number of local reconciliation initiatives have been taken, such as Cinema for Reconciliation in Meta and the Paddling for Peace project in the Caquetá department, which brings victims and ex-combatants together in a rafting tournament. Those initiatives

are helping to restore social relations where they were previously impossible. And then there are inclusive processes. As others who spoke before me have said, women, young people, children, refugees, displaced persons, minorities and other vulnerable groups may all have dealt with particular experiences during conflict and may therefore have specific needs within the reconciliation process. Their experiences must be heard and taken into account, and their participation should be more than merely symbolic.

Thirdly, it is important to restore the trust of citizens in their institutions. In that regard, it is important to address the feeling of insecurity and mistrust that some may have towards the police, the judiciary or other public institutions. The Security Council has been well aware of the contribution of transitional justice to reconciliation efforts, since as long ago as 2004, in a presidential statement adopted on 6 October (S/PRST/2004/34), it drew attention to the full range of justice mechanisms that could be considered during periods of transition, including international, national and mixed criminal tribunals and truth and reconciliation commissions. It also included the promotion of transitional justice measures in various forms in the mandates of several peace operations, in support of national capacities. In that context, it is a positive that the new integrated standards for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are now also just as focused on transitional justice. The same should apply to exit strategies for peace operations.

On the basis of those various experiences, we could conduct a broader review in order to identify some key principles for guiding the Security Council in its future decisions in this area. Belgium believes that when circumstances permit, transitional justice is a tool that the Council should continue to consider as part of its mandate to maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Secretary-General and the other briefers for their assessments of the role of reconciliation in maintaining international peace and security.

Lasting national reconciliation is indeed a determining factor in the successful resolution of conflicts and the prevention of relapses into conflict. The achievement of peace agreements and lasting post-conflict reconstruction and development are possible only when long-term, mutually acceptable solutions are reached among the parties to a conflict. And the

universal key to resolving domestic conflict is always, and only, comprehensive nationwide dialogue. As practice has shown, that is the only way to ensure a robust, lasting and viable solution, regardless of the State concerned. As the concept note (S/2019/871, annex) submitted for our consideration rightly points out, during post-conflict peacebuilding, including with regard to national reconciliation, it is important that both Government and society recognize their national ownership of lasting peace. That approach is enshrined in the 2016 twin resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262). And in particular, that means that the State bears the primary responsibility for maintaining the security of its people, while all sectors of society have to acknowledge their responsibility for supporting peace processes.

The actions of the international community, including individual States, their alliances and the United Nations itself, should be aimed at assisting the peace efforts of actors within the States concerned. The United Nations in particular has all the necessary tools to help States achieve national reconciliation, through the good offices of the Secretary-General and his special envoys and special representatives, and the work of peacekeeping and special political missions and country teams. However, in our view, United Nations efforts should focus on cooperation with official Governments. Interaction with the various actors on the ground should take place only with the national authorities playing a coordinating role. Furthermore, assistance from the international community in ensuring national reconciliation should be depoliticized and cannot become a way to impose ready-made solutions from outside. Attempts to support a given party to a conflict based on one's own interests only deepens divides and prevents healing and genuine reconciliation.

With regard to this topic, we would like to go into more detail on the role of international justice and holding perpetrators to account in the context of reconciliation. Justice and reconciliation certainly do not always go hand in hand. Often the operations of international justice bodies lead to even greater escalation of differences within societies. That is currently a pressing issue in a number of States in various regions around the world. We are witnessing the settling of political scores with former opponents with the help of the organs of international justice here at the United Nations.

We firmly believe that in each individual case it is essential to work to find the right balance between the interests of restoring peace and justice, however difficult that may be. In every case efforts should be made to strengthen national justice institutions. However, we believe that establishing the facts during trials and prosecuting those responsible, as well as acquitting the innocent, can make a real contribution to normalizing the situation and appeasing feelings of enmity and hostility among the parties to a conflict. But that is possible only when those processes are impartial and unpoliticized.

Regrettably, international judicial mechanisms often manifest patent double standards. For example, the work of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals can hardly be called a success story from the point of view of their contribution to the reconciliation process in the Balkans. The unjustified prevailing prosecutorial bias in the consideration of cases involving accused persons of Serbian origin was compounded by the lack of a real commitment to uncovering the myriad evils perpetrated by Kosovo-Albanian field commanders. It is clear that attempts to blame one crime or another on peoples, Governments and States generally are fomenting tension and mutual mistrust in the lands of the former Yugoslavia, reviving long-standing problems and inter-ethnic strife in the region. Promoting reconciliation is therefore out of the question.

We feel compelled to point out that the International Criminal Court (ICC) has followed a similar path. The cases referred to it by the Security Council are being considered in a way that is at variance with the goal of reconciliation, which worsens disagreements between the warring parties, something that is particularly evident in the ICC's Libyan dossier.

If we look at the activities of the international tribunals generally, we can see that their relation to reconciliation processes in post-conflict societies is an exceedingly indirect one. Rwanda's experience is salutary in that regard. The establishment there at the national level of a system of local justice, in the form of semi-traditional Gacaca courts, played a significant role in post-conflict reconciliation efforts that emerged owing to the low level of effectiveness of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), which considered only the cases of the main organizers of the 1994 genocide. In practice, the job of the Gacaca

courts was not just to see justice done but also to promote reconciliation within society by ensuring the widest possible participation of the population in the courts' activities, enabling ordinary people to publicly consider cases and hand down fair decisions. The concept of cooperation and active participation in court hearings has become part of the public consciousness. Proof of the Gacaca courts' effectiveness is the fact that in 10 years they considered some 2 million cases, at a cost 45 times less than what the ICTR spent in handling fewer than 100 cases during the 20 years of its existence. The results of the work of the Gacaca courts are a testament to the effectiveness of seeking African solutions to African problems.

In conclusion, in connection with what I have said, I want to note that we believe that the work of international criminal justice institutions in the context of post-conflict reconciliation should not be considered the last word. The harm that might be done could be far more significant than the value it might add.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the holding of this open debate on the role of reconciliation in maintaining international peace and security, as well as your presence here today, Mr. President, which reflects the importance that your country attaches to the issue. Côte d'Ivoire also thanks the Secretary-General and the briefers for their informative briefings and relevant recommendations.

According to the Constitution of UNESCO, since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed. While that quotation, so dear to UNESCO, urges us to mobilize our collective consciousness in order to prevent conflicts, it also implicitly underlines the essential role of reconciliation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Reconciliation should therefore play a role throughout the entire peace continuum and be a part of each of its distinct phases, from prevention, through management, to the consolidation of post-crisis stability. Above all, it must involve the parties to conflicts and ensure that they can overcome and forgive, reflecting values without which no lasting peace is possible.

Côte d'Ivoire's recent history has been marked by events that while undoubtedly painful taught us many lessons. We learned, in particular, that reconciliation is a difficult, lengthy process that requires both the willingness of the parties to conflicts to pursue peace and the continued support of the international

community, including regional organizations. In that regard, at the national level, reconciliation must be the backbone of all post-crisis and peacebuilding strategies. It must be part of a holistic approach that takes into account the root causes of the conflict and involves all national political and social actors, without exception. In order to be a genuine nationwide cathartic process, reconciliation must enable the perpetrators of crimes, as well as their victims, to be heard, because they must be encouraged to forgive one another and agree to transform their differences and their traumas into a new social contract.

In the light of those requirements, as soon as Côte d'Ivoire's post-electoral crisis ended in 2011, our Government established a dialogue, truth and reconciliation commission whose task was to restore dialogue between all of the country's sociopolitical and ethnic elements and promote their peaceful coexistence. During its two-year mandate from 2011 to 2013, the commission held nearly 70,000 victim hearings and 80 public hearings. In its subsequent recommendations the commission considered the effective application of the law on rural land, improved consideration of issues related to the status of women, the reduction of regional disparities, the establishment of a republican army and the holding of national days of remembrance and forgiveness and days dedicated to dialogue. In May 2015 a national commission for reconciliation and victim compensation took over and was entrusted with the responsibility of identifying and compensating the victims of the post-electoral crisis.

While we recognize that reconciliation should be central to post-crisis and peacebuilding strategies, it must also be inclusive and ensure that there is a significant arena for the voices of women and young people, who are the primary victims of violence in conflict situations but who can also be the architects of peace and stability, as Ms. Elman just reminded us. Also crucial to reconciliation are transitional justice and the implementation of the principle of accountability, particularly in cases of serious human rights violations, including mass killings and sexual violence against women and children. In that context, the support of the international community and development partners is essential to strengthening transitional justice institutions as well as ensuring the compensation, psychological care and social reintegration of war victims. I want to underline the important role in that regard of the Peacebuilding Fund, which is another tool

for us in our efforts to consolidate peace when it has been restored.

If reconciliation is to live up to the outcomes expected of it, it must take into account social and cultural regulatory mechanisms such as inter-ethnic alliances and peace pacts and the work of religious associations, and the leading roles, especially in the context of Côte d'Ivoire, that schools and national radio play through their ability to preserve social equilibrium and coexistence among all sectors of society. The creation of Côte d'Ivoire's National Chamber of Traditional Kings and Chiefs, with a view to further strengthening the achievements of the two post-conflict reconciliation commissions, has been an effective response to the requirements of reconciliation, working to establish harmonious relations between the Government and the people and to strengthen national unity and social cohesion.

Beyond the national arena, reconciliation is also needed in cases of conflicts between States. In that regard, the willingness of the warring parties to reconcile and work for peace can benefit from the support of regional organizations, which among other things are responsible for promoting dialogue and cooperation among State actors.

In conclusion, my delegation urges the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, to continue its multifaceted support for ongoing national and inter-State reconciliation processes with a view to strengthening international peace and security.

Mr. Ugarelli (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome your presence at today's meeting, Mr. President. We also commend the Secretary-General and our briefers for their discussion of the best ways to consolidate reconciliation efforts in peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Reconciliation is a very complex and multidimensional concept whose implementation in response to the specifics of individual conflict situations has the potential to contribute to re-establishing the possibility of peaceful coexistence and cooperation and transcends the concept of a mere ceasefire. Reconciliation must be understood as a process and a part of a much more ambitious and comprehensive strategy, aimed at identifying and tackling the political, social, legal and economic root causes of conflicts in order to prevent them from recurring. We therefore share the view that there is no single, invariable model

that is applicable to all cases of conflict. However, we believe that they always share certain characteristics. They are voluntary. They recognize that the process must be gradual and multifaceted, and that the restoration of trust and the inclusion of every level of society are crucial to the transformation of political, social and historical relations that must be achieved. In our view, religious, political, social, cultural and media leaders, among others, now have a central role to play, both in creating an environment conducive to the launch of reconciliation politics and in implementing them, while in particular promoting the participation of women and young people.

Experience has shown us a range of actions that are useful to those ends. For example, the formation of peace, truth and reconciliation commissions clearly illustrated the importance of gaining in-depth understanding of the facts with self-reflective perspective in order to interpret what happened and paving the way to acceptance and forgiveness. Likewise, efforts around events and symbolic gestures are especially valuable, at the same time as establishing comprehensive policies to deal with the memory of what happened, including actions to locate those who disappeared in the course of the conflict, in accordance with resolution 2474 (2019).

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes for former combatants are also an important element of the reconciliation process, which also eliminate a potential threat to peace.

In cases linked to atrocity crimes, such as genocide and crimes against humanity, the need for justice and the fight against impunity as well as various forms of recognition and compensation of victims function as conditional factors of credibility towards reconciliation.

When this does not occur, the international community, including the Security Council, must assume its responsibility, setting up special political missions, ad-hoc tribunals and referring situations to the International Criminal Court with a view to ensuring that the perpetrators of serious human rights violations and of violations of international humanitarian law answer for their crimes.

In that context, we would like to echo the representative of Germany in highlighting the value of transitional consensus, such as the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law

committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, as well as the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight the importance of preventive diplomacy in addressing the root causes of conflict, especially to prevent human rights violations. Such activities avoid the need to establish reconciliation processes in future. To that end, more active participation by regional and subregional organizations and neighbouring States is necessary to bring parties together before violence breaks out.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General and the two other speakers for their briefings. I also thank the British presidency for having convened this debate.

France supports the momentum the Secretary-General has invested in diplomacy for peace. The United Nations must invest more upstream of conflict, in prevention, and downstream, to build lasting peace. Strengthening United Nations capacities in mediation, early warning and support for reconciliation, including through the growing power of the Peacebuilding Fund, is essential. The 2020 peacebuilding architecture review should provide an opportunity to go even further.

Justice and the fight against impunity are essential preconditions for fair and lasting reconciliation. There can be no peace without justice. It is essential that justice be done in the aftermath of conflict, particularly in cases of serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. The aim is to ensure recognition for victims and break the infernal cycle of vengeance. That is why France is deeply convinced that the International Criminal Court plays an essential role in the fight against impunity, with respect for the principle of complementarity.

France also welcomes the efforts made in Iraq by the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant to collect evidence of the crimes committed by Da'esh. We will also continue to provide our full political and financial support to the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.

To prevent the recurrence of atrocities, reconciliation processes must place special emphasis on memory and on victims. We welcome the activities of transitional justice mechanisms, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, and of international criminal tribunals, which have undeniably contributed to reconciliation and peace in the regions concerned. Their legacy and, more broadly, their work on memory and the historical documentation of the facts, must now be preserved.

Teaching young people must take over to prevent any resurgence of divisions that fuel violence. This is the responsibility not only of Governments and local actors but also of the Security Council. In this respect, it is disturbing to note the lingering denial in certain areas of the genocide of Tutsi in Rwanda and the glorification of war criminals in the former Yugoslavia. This is another reason that transitional justice and the fight against impunity in general must systematically address the dimension of memory.

Protecting the rights of the survivors, including through the establishment of compensation mechanisms, is of crucial importance. France fully supports the International Criminal Court Trust Fund for Victims. Where jurisdictional structures are lacking or too weak, it is essential that medical, psychological and social support be provided to facilitate the reintegration of survivors. This is the objective set by the International Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, founded by Nobel Peace laureates Nadia Murad and Denis Mukwege.

In this context, peacebuilding must integrate the objective of reconciliation earlier on. We must promote the most inclusive reconciliation processes possible. They must involve women, youth, civil society actors and community and religious leaders. I would like to focus on the role of women, which is a priority for France and for the Security Council, with the women and peace and security agenda. Peace processes that involve women are more effective and longer lasting. We welcome the efforts of the Peacebuilding Fund, one third of whose projects integrate such considerations.

There is also a need to investigate events that could fuel the cycle of hate as swiftly as possible. In the Sahel, for example, terrorists are high-jacking inter-community conflicts. We welcome in that regard the efforts of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to investigate

human rights violations and develop reconciliation initiatives. The visits to Mali by the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and by the United Nations Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali were also very helpful. While such efforts should continue, it is also crucial to support national strategies for conflict prevention and reconciliation, because it is primarily up to local authorities to, in a neutral and impartial manner, ensure their communities coexist.

I would like to underscore the outstanding work carried out in the Central African Republic by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic to promote the signing of local peace and reconciliation agreements, which paved the way for the signing, on 6 February, of a comprehensive peace agreement. Local monitoring committees under the agreement have since been playing an essential role in ensure genuine ownership of the peace process.

Reconciliation is essential for building lasting peace. It must therefore be systemically included among the objectives set by the Security Council.

Mr. Syihab (Indonesia): At the outset, allow me to join others in warmly welcoming your presence, Mr. President, among us today. We thank the United Kingdom for convening this open debate on reconciliation. We also thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Alpaslan Özerdem and Ms. Ilwad Elman for their very insightful briefings.

Indonesia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Philippines later today on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

With the rise in conflicts and their complexities, solutions are not always easy. Reconciliation rebuilds trust, confidence and relations in societies afflicted by conflict. It heals the wounds of conflict and helps societies move towards a peaceful future. Coupled with peacebuilding and development, reconciliation prevents the recurrence of conflict and ensures durable peace. Indonesia has first-hand experience in promoting successful reconciliation to resolve communal conflicts in Ambon, Poso and Aceh in the early 2000s. It is on the basis of our own experience that we share the following points.

First, national ownership and inclusiveness are key to achieving lasting reconciliation. For reconciliation

to work, it must be nationally driven — it cannot be imposed from the outside. Lasting reconciliation also requires all segments of society to be onboard. In that regard, I would like to echo what was mentioned earlier by the Secretary-General on the fact that reconciliation must come from within, with the full participation of all segments of society. Therefore, it must involve the parties to the conflict as well as civil society organizations, community and religious leaders, women and youth. Women in particular have proven to be important actors in reconciliation. Our own experience shows that women have played an extensive role in advancing reconciliation at the grass-roots level in a variety of ways. Indonesia strongly supports the greater participation of women in reconciliation, as well as throughout the entire continuum of the peace process.

Secondly, for reconciliation to take root, an enabling environment is required. First of all, the underlying causes of the conflict must be addressed; immediate humanitarian needs must be met; the rule of law and the judicial system must be restored to ensure justice for all; and democracy needs to be established to provide a platform for open and genuine dialogue. At the same time, economic development must be accelerated so that the peace dividends can be directly felt by the people. Only through this effort can we materialize the strong nexus between sustaining peace and sustainable development.

Thirdly, the international community must provide the necessary support for reconciliation. While reconciliation is a nationally driven process, the role of the international community is indispensable. The United Nations, through its peacekeeping operations, special political missions and the Peacebuilding Commission, must continue working to facilitate dialogue and create conditions conducive to reconciliation. To assist post-conflict countries in rebuilding their economies, the United Nations and the international community need to mobilize financial and technical support. In that regard, continued support for the Peacebuilding Fund is of crucial importance.

For its part, Indonesia has been active in supporting peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts, including through capacity-building programmes within the framework of South-South and triangular cooperation. At the regional level, Indonesia initiated the establishment of the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation, which is based in Jakarta. The Institute promotes capacity-building and the sharing

of experiences and best practices on peace and reconciliation in the region and beyond.

In conclusion, Indonesia stands ready to further share its experience in reconciliation. We are also committed to continue assisting post-conflict countries in promoting reconciliation, peacebuilding and sustainable peace.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to welcome the Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia, His Excellency Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, and thank the presidency of the United Kingdom for the excellent initiative to convene this important debate. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General and our other briefers today, Mr. Alpaslan Özerdem and Ms. Ilwad Elman, for their comprehensive and enlightening presentations. We would also like to commend the Peacebuilding Commission for its support in post-conflict situations, as well as its role assisting in the prevention of conflicts.

Among the various approaches to conflict prevention and resolution, our delegation believes that the promotion of social reconciliation is a strategic means of preventing and resolving conflicts. Therefore, we believe that it is necessary to harness political instruments to promote social reconciliation initiatives, such as establishing peace commissions, fostering dialogue, raising awareness through the media and advancing reconciliation among young people and women.

It is for that reason that, under the successful initiative of His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, my Government periodically holds national dialogues between all established and recognized political parties in the country. They serve to provide a broad forum for discussion and interaction among all political stakeholders on a wide variety of aspects concerning the political, economic and sociocultural life of the country. Those dialogues underpin the sustained climate of reduced tensions and national harmony that has prevailed in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for the past 40 years, thereby guaranteeing participatory and sustainable development in infrastructure, education, health, energy and water supply, to mention but a few. These matters are addressed at the economic conferences that are also held periodically in the country.

The establishment of peace commissions, which serve as grass-roots organizations to mobilize local leaders and community members, helps to prevent outbreaks of violence and foster tolerance. Their work can involve a series of tasks, such as countering rumours and exaggeration, advocating non-violent solutions to conflicts, providing education for peace through community programmes and acting as mediators for conflicting groups. In the appropriate conditions and where requirements are met, peace commissions can facilitate communication among different groups and engage with opposition parties to reduce violence and promote a degree of tolerance. Consequently, peace commissions have become the focal point of institutional strengthening efforts aimed at capacity-building and ensuring some uniformity in practice and procedure.

Finally, resolution 2419 (2018), on youth and peace and security, reminds us that the inclusion of young people is key to advancing national peacebuilding processes and objectives, while ensuring that the needs of all segments of society are taken into account. In that regard, we believe it is crucial to consider the active participation and inclusion of young people in all aspects of peacebuilding.

Promoting reconciliation among young people could serve as a strategic way of building on peacekeeping. Young people suffer psychological wounds caused by the trauma that they or their families have personally experienced, which breeds bitterness and mistrust vis-à-vis their communities. Reconciliation with young people fosters restoration and rebuilds societal relations.

Along the same lines, efforts to ensure public education for young people, such as media campaigns, can help to dispel the rumours and propaganda spread by extremists, which fuel social and political tensions. It is also important to take heed of the role that women can play in peacebuilding and peacekeeping through reconciliation.

Let me conclude by saying that we wish to pay well-deserved tribute to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Mr. Abiy Ahmed, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, for his efforts at reconciliation with Eritrea. They have established a new dynamic of a calming of tensions in the Horn of Africa.

Ms. Norman-Chalet (United States of America): It is great to see you here, Sir, with us today. I thank the briefers for their very insightful and concrete

recommendations. It was good to have the Secretary-General here, as always.

The birth of the United Nations delivered a powerful message of peace to a world shattered by war. Since 1945, this institution has been the world's pre-eminent multilateral forum for dialogue, debate and, perhaps most importantly, reconciliation. These are initiatives that the United States fully supports. We seek justice for victims and accountability for those responsible for atrocities. We create programming, provide technical support and elevate the voices of those who are most vulnerable, and we furnish significant funding for these efforts. We also recognize the vital work of the United Nations Special Representatives and Special Envoys, as well as the United Nations fact-finding missions, to bring greater reconciliation to communities battered by conflict. We also recognize the role of women, as others have this morning, in advancing lasting and sustained reconciliation in peace agreements.

There are many specific opportunities for this body to build towards reconciliation in our time, and I should like to address just a few of them this morning.

In Syria, the United States firmly believes that the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria has a vital role to play in gathering information on serious crimes committed in the country. We applaud the progress that the Mechanism has achieved in the last year, and we are proud to both provide an additional \$2 million this year and support efforts to fund the Mechanism from the United Nations regular budget.

We honour the resiliency of Syrian civil-society leaders who have risked their lives to document human rights abuses and protect the victims of atrocities. Their work is instrumental in promoting justice and accountability in Syria, both of which will be critical to any real solution to the conflict.

In Burma, addressing security-force abuses of ethnic minority groups will be essential to meaningful reconciliation. To that end, we welcome the United Nations independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar's documentation of human rights abuses committed in Myanmar since 2011, including against the Rohingya in Rakhine state and against other vulnerable communities in Kachin, Shan and elsewhere across the country. I would also like to reiterate our strong support for the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar. As in Syria, the United States is deeply appreciative of the Burmese civil-society

organizations that, under conditions of great danger, continue to document human rights abuses and pursue accountability for those responsible for atrocities.

In Iraq, we must not waver from holding the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) accountable for the atrocities it has committed against all Iraqis. No segment of Iraqi society, including those from diverse faiths and communities, has escaped ISIS's terror. To begin a process of healing and reconciliation, we must develop a balanced and truthful account of events. Supported by the Government of Iraq and unanimously endorsed by the Security Council again this September, the United States continues to be a strong supporter of the mandate of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant to collect, store and preserve evidence of ISIS's atrocities, which may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Also in Iraq, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq is playing a pivotal role in partnering with the Government and the people of Iraq to advance inclusive political dialogue towards the aim of national and community-level reconciliation.

In South Sudan, the United Nations Mission there has engaged in peace talks and is empowering communities to undertake similar dialogues, some of which result in conflict resolution at the local level. But while these efforts can help achieve some reconciliation, they are insufficient without a larger, Government-led effort to heal the wounds caused by the five-year war.

The United Nations has a unique ability to foster peace and reconciliation around the world, and the United States believes that through mediation, accountability and justice for victims, the United Nations can make proper use of this ability. The Council and the United Nations can count on the United States to continue supporting these efforts, for the work of reconciliation in the name of human flourishing is nothing less than our highest calling.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General as well as today's briefers, Mr. Özerdem and Ms. Elman, for their very informative interventions. I would also like to thank the British presidency and you personally, Sir, for having organized this open debate, which addresses one of the most crucial elements of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

While there is neither a common definition of reconciliation nor one universal model that countries can simply implement, it is essential for us to exchange views on every aspect of this complex process. The common denominator of all of the different models and perceptions of the reconciliation process should be a survivor-centred approach. It is essential that the process itself and the priorities be set by the communities affected.

National reconciliation and peacebuilding cannot work if certain vulnerable groups or minorities - including displaced persons, persons belonging to religious minorities, women, young people and people with disabilities - are discriminated against or marginalized. Here, working hand in hand with communities, religious leaders have to play their part.

Often religions and beliefs are perceived as a factor of conflict, but we should not forget that it may also be a part of the solution. The recent history of my own country illustrates clearly the positive role of the Church in creating conditions for social dialogue, which 30 years ago resulted in peaceful, democratic changes in Poland.

As pointed out in the excellent concept note prepared by the United Kingdom presidency (S/2019/871, annex), community and faith leaders can play a critical role in reconciliation efforts at all levels, especially in struggling with issues around freedom of religion and belief.

In this context, interreligious and intercultural dialogue is vital to building a lasting peace. For this dialogue to be effective, it must be carried out in good faith and based on knowledge, mutual understanding and tolerance.

On 22 August, we observed for the first time the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, established by the General Assembly on the initiative of Poland with the support of a cross-regional group of countries. We believe that this initiative will positively contribute to combating hate crimes and acts of violence based on religion or belief and further strengthen interreligious dialogue and respect for religious diversity. It creates a platform for discussions and allows victims and survivors to have their voices heard.

The first-ever Arria Formula meeting devoted to this topic, held during the Polish presidency of the

Council last August, proved that the voices of victims, while heartbreaking, give us hope and direction for the way ahead.

The President: The representative of Germany has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): The statement by the representative of Russia was a frontal attack on the international justice system, which Germany believes is key to reconciliation. In that context, I would like to ask the representative of Russia three questions.

First, with regard to the Nuremberg trials, which serve today as a point of reference for international courts, does he consider that those trials were wrong and should not have happened? Secondly, with regard to the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, which he criticized, does he believe that it was wrong that Mr. Mladić and Mr. Karadžić were tried by that court? Thirdly, with regard to his reproach of double standards, does he acknowledge that a special court has been established in The Hague to try Kosovo Liberation Army fighters for possible crimes against humanity?

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to respond.

Mr. Repkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): As I understand it, these questions are addressed personally to Mr. Dmitry Polyanskiy, who is at an event with the Secretary-General at the moment. He will undoubtedly respond to them. I do not want to turn the important subject of national reconciliation into what is frankly an effort to dig up the past. In any event, we will respond to him bilaterally.

The President: I would like to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber. As a reminder, the red light on the collar of the microphone will begin to flash after four minutes have elapsed.

I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary.

Mr. Szijjártó (Hungary): I genuinely appreciate your personal endeavours in this area, Mr. President. It is great to see you and your wonderful country presiding over the Security Council. We also appreciate the fact

that you are personally emphasizing a topic that you have put on the Council's agenda. The world is changing very rapidly, not just because of the new industrial revolution we are witnessing but thanks to the many political changes that are creating a completely new world order and are definitely increasing the number of conflicts around the world. Regrettably, when it comes to the reasons for those conflicts and, more importantly, to their resolution, we have to admit that there is too much hypocrisy and political correctness in the air. If we are to overcome the serious conflicts all over the world, we will have to restore honesty and mutual respect to our international discourse. We must address our major global political dilemma. Honestly, we must stop bashing, cornering and judging one another. We should end stigmatization and the spread of fake news, which can very easily lead to conflicts without reason and create tensions that result in harmful and dangerous situations.

I believe that an important precondition for reconciliation is the recognition of the universal right of nations and countries to maintain their national identity and cultural, historic and religious traditions. Questioning or challenging them can make reconciliation impossible. Similarly, the idea that the pursuit of national interests represents an extremist ideology is also likely to make reconciliation impossible. The idea that respect for one's religious heritage is retrograde or that it is acceptable to permit loud and violent minorities to put pressure on silent, peaceful majorities also makes reconciliation impossible. We can help reconciliation happen if we universally and globally recognize that we all have a fundamental human right to lead safe and secure lives in our own homes. We should switch the focus of international efforts to helping people return home. We should all focus on creating the necessary conditions to realize that. We consider the role of moderate and peaceful religious leaders, and of intercultural dialogue among young people, to be extremely important in that regard.

In the case of Hungary, we put special emphasis on support to persecuted Christian communities around the world so that they are not forced to leave their homes and can live in peaceful conditions there. We also invite students from all over the world to study in Hungary, fully funded by the Hungarian State, to meet other young people from other parts of the world, encounter different cultural and religious backgrounds and learn how to respect one another and live together. This

semester we are hosting 7,440 students from various countries and cultures studying in Hungary. Next semester that number will grow to 9,500. We genuinely believe that if we can provide young people from different historic, cultural and religious backgrounds with these kinds of opportunities to meet one another, that is the best way we can help reconciliation happen.

In conclusion, we are once again grateful to you, Mr. President, and to the United Kingdom for putting so much effort into promoting reconciliation. Although we are a small country with very limited resources, I promise that we will make our contribution so that this very important goal is met.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway. We thank the United Kingdom for convening this important open debate.

In the transition to lasting peace, relationships must be rebuilt and victims' rights must be at the centre of any peace process. The Final Agreement for the Termination of Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace in Colombia has established a new standard for dealing with victims' rights, transitional justice and truth. The broad participation at the negotiation table, which included victims and women, was essential. It led to the establishment of the Truth Commission, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the International Commission on Missing Persons, which are now fully operational.

In war-torn and polarized societies in particular, the voices and leadership of civic, social and religious leaders are critical to ensuring the creation of a dynamic of reconciliation and dialogue. A clear example of that was South Africa, whose reconciliation process has been an inspiration to many peacebuilding efforts since. Inter- and intrareligious dialogues may prove vital and useful policy tools that help foster social cohesion and sustainable peace. Religious actors can provide a gateway to understanding and working with different local communities.

In any conflict, reconciliation efforts must include the affected communities and their people and be owned by them, but the United Nations has powerful tools at its disposal to help parties bring about reconciliation.

I would like to highlight five ways we can maximize that role.

First, the Security Council must remain engaged long enough not only to foster but to sustain peace. It must make full use of the tools at its disposal to promote reconciliation, including at stages where outbreaks of hostilities may be imminent.

Secondly, the Council must continue to develop its partnerships with regional organizations, including the African Union. Regional actors are often best placed to support lasting reconciliation.

Thirdly, the Peacebuilding Commission has an important role to play in sustaining peace, and its role and resources should be better utilized.

Fourthly, the United Nations must assist in addressing the root causes of conflict. The promotion of economic and social development should, wherever possible, be connected to efforts to sustain peace.

Fifthly, we support the Secretary-General's call for a surge in peace diplomacy, and we welcome the recently enacted United Nations reforms to this end. We must draw on the strengths of United Nations country teams, the Mediation Support Unit, United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The United Nations system should now be better positioned to take a holistic approach, linking the promotion of security, development and human rights.

In all those efforts, women's empowerment is key. Excluding half the population from peacemaking simply does not work. Engaging with young people is also crucial if we are to build strong and resilient societies.

Finally, the Nordic countries would like to stress that all of the foregoing is possible only if the States Members of the United Nations ensure that the Organization is given adequate resources and the support it needs to play an effective role in peace efforts.

The President: May I add my own voice to that of my Minister in asking speakers to limit their statements to four minutes. If we do not adhere to the time limits, some colleagues will not be able to speak in today's debate. It is to help and guide the discussion that I say that the presidency sees no need to thank us for organizing the debate, or for any remarks on our wisdom and sagacity in choosing the theme. When the time has reached four minutes, a light will begin to

flash, following which my very friendly colleague will come with a note asking the speaker to wind up.

I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): For more than 15 years and in many partner countries, Switzerland has supported and assisted transitional justice and other efforts to deal with the past, by which societies are trying to cope with atrocities they have experienced. Switzerland is convinced that dealing with the past can, in the right circumstances, contribute to reconciliation. Echoing several delegations in their statements from this morning, we remain convinced of the critical importance of national and international criminal justice in reconciliation and lasting peace. I would like to highlight three issues in that regard.

First, a process-based approach is crucial if we are to help transform relationships, which is a central element of reconciliation. Efforts to deal with the past must be holistic and properly sequenced. Too often, scattered initiatives, sometimes imposed from the outside, have deepened the rifts in societies rather than repaired them. Ongoing coordination and concerted action within the United Nations, including in the Security Council, with national authorities and other relevant stakeholders is needed. We also join those members of the Council members who highlighted the key role of the Peacebuilding Commission in this regard.

Secondly, experience shows that efforts undertaken at the local level stand a good chance of succeeding. Local approaches result in concrete initiatives and skills that can be of great use at other levels of the State structure. The United Nations, including the Security Council, should serve as a catalyst for these positive dynamics and help to enhance them. The United Nations has the important responsibility of raising stakeholder awareness when such initiatives may violate human rights or other peremptory norms of international law.

Thirdly, inclusion is key. While national authorities and, where appropriate, the international community, must assume the primary responsibility for working towards reconciliation, dialogue among political elites alone cannot ensure lasting peace. Other leaders and representatives of political and social groups, including women, young people and minority representatives, need to be part of the process. Religious leaders, for example, play a crucial role as providers of social services and spiritual and moral guidance. They often

influence the values and narratives shaping a country's political culture.

The United Nations can do better in engaging with more diverse interlocutors. For its part, the Council must recognize civil society's essential role in reconciliation and peacebuilding, as proven by the many civil society briefers who have come before the Council. The Council must also take a clear stance in the relevant items on its agenda on the need to protect human right defenders.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mrs. Alhefeiti (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important debate and express our appreciation for the United Kingdom's efforts aimed at supporting peace and reconciliation processes all over the world. We also welcome the focus in Lord Tariq Ahmad's statement on the issue of peaceful coexistence among religious groups, which is an important issue for my country.

The Middle East is going through a critical period and complex challenges, but the current conditions may be giving rise to an opportunity to build a new regional order based on respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States if these conditions are addressed with wisdom and patience and if political processes that lead to firm positions against extremism and terrorism are established. In this vein, mediation and other reconciliation processes can narrow differences and support reaching political settlements consistent with international law and the legitimate aspirations of the peoples, especially those that reject sectarianism and subordination and that seek strong and able national States.

The United Arab Emirates has always and enthusiastically promoted the principles of tolerance and dialogue so as to spare our region further conflicts and wars. Tolerance is crucial for reconciliation. My country does not promote tolerance as a mere slogan; rather, it has made it a cornerstone for its domestic and foreign policy, having undertaken numerous initiatives and practical steps to that end. For example, since declaring 2019 the Year of Tolerance, the United Arab Emirates has launched more than 1,500 initiatives to promote the values of peaceful coexistence and religious and cultural exchange in the country and abroad. Furthermore, as part of our efforts to spread

a message of openness and moderation, the United Arab Emirates, in cooperation with UNESCO, has supported the reconstruction of several archaeological and cultural sites in Mosul that were destroyed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham.

Accordingly, we urge the United Nations to continue working to create an atmosphere of reconciliation among local communities, especially those torn by conflict. The Organization's rich experience in reconciliation, stretching over seven decades, can be a useful source of lessons learned and best practices shared on the role of reconciliation, while taking into account regional and local contexts.

Reconciliation can only be achieved if it is accompanied by a comprehensive peacebuilding process that includes the strengthening of the rule of law, the preservation of national institutions and reconstruction, and support for those affected by conflict. In this regard, we urge the international community to ensure the broad participation of all members of society, especially women and young people, due to their important role in advancing peace processes and making them succeed.

We cannot ignore the active role that regional organizations and neighbouring States can play in mediation and reconciliation, as they have extensive knowledge and expertise and share a direct interest in ensuring regional stability. In this regard, we appreciate the sincere efforts of the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia aimed at unifying the Yemeni ranks, as well as the pivotal role it played in the adoption of the Riyadh Agreement, which has served to enhance efforts to address the risks and threats Yemen is facing. Similarly, the success of the mediation efforts in the Sudan underscores the important role that regional organizations and neighbouring States can play in the peaceful settlement of conflicts. We therefore urge the Security Council to step up its consultations with regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we would like to note that reconciliation processes do not succeed overnight or through the mere signing of an agreement. Reconciliation requires continuous and gradual efforts aimed at healing the wounds of conflict and the laying of a solid foundation for peaceful coexistence. As we have stressed elsewhere, parties to conflicts should engage in mediation and reconciliation processes in good faith.

They must refrain from exploiting such processes for political ends and stop misusing mass media to fuel tensions. We reaffirm that the United Arab Emirates is committed to spreading the principles of tolerance and coexistence and to pursuing political solutions as the best way to address the many challenges we all face together.

The President: It gives me great pleasure to welcome to the Chamber for the first time the Ambassador of Japan, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): I just arrived in New York last night, and this is the very first meeting in which I am participating as the new Permanent Representative of Japan. I am truly grateful to be in the Chamber.

In the year 2000, the Council heard a briefing on peacebuilding by Mrs. Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, with an emphasis on reconciliation (see S/PV.4219). In her briefing, Mrs. Ogata said that, for her agency, peacebuilding was not an abstract concept. She saw the concrete, sometimes desperate, needs of returnees in places where communities remained deeply divided. She said that she was exploring new avenues, in particular in the promotion of community coexistence, as the first step towards reconciliation. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees launched a project in the returnee areas of Rwanda and Bosnia called Imagine Coexistence, which consisted essentially of support to small community-based, inter-ethnic and income-generating activities around which they built clusters of such other activities as sports.

It has been nearly 20 years since Mrs. Ogata, who passed away last month, made her statement in the Security Council Chamber. Nonetheless, I believe her thoughts and actions on how to achieve tangible reconciliation are not obsolete. She was a true trailblazer in the field of peacebuilding and will be remembered for her quest for human security.

Over the ensuing two decades, Japan has sought to build on Mrs. Ogata's work and address the question of reconciliation in devastated areas of the world. We have supported national reconciliation processes in several countries and will continue to do so. Based on this experience, I would today like to highlight three key qualities that Japan believes are necessary for supporting lasting reconciliation processes.

First, they must be inclusive, welcoming the voices of women, youth, community leaders and faith leaders, and the private sector. Secondly, they must offer socioeconomic development, ensuring that those who have been affected by inequality, in particular young people, are given employment opportunities. Thirdly, they must have sustainable frameworks that allow for the building of strong institutions with broad national ownership.

The foregoing three elements — inclusiveness, socioeconomic development and strong institutions — are not independent, but rather parts of a whole. How, then, can we, as the international community, accelerate all three to promote reconciliation? In our view, one of the most effective ways is to ensure that the voices of the people on the ground are reflected in our efforts. Each reconciliation process is unique and must include the personal perspectives of those who live it. We therefore need to ensure a people-centred approach, emphasizing the value of human security.

I would also like to point out that the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is a useful platform where we can share good practices and learn lessons. Through its convening power and its advisory role to the Council, the PBC, together with the Peacebuilding Fund, can help connect New York and the field more closely.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Japan's belief in the importance of reconciliation in addressing the root causes of conflict and contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Castañeda Solares (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): As the cornerstone of reconciliation, Guatemala recognizes the crucial importance of Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, which refers to the peaceful settlement of disputes, along with the provisions of Chapter VII to maintain or restore international peace and security.

As a country that promotes peace, Guatemala believes that reconciliation complements good offices and mediation, which are acknowledged as important measures for preventing or resolving disputes and conflicts, in accordance with international law. If reconciliation processes were launched sufficiently in advance to address the root causes and dynamics of conflicts, while taking into consideration the traditions

and sociopolitical idiosyncrasies of the affected population, conflicts could be prevented in time.

As the Council knows, my country was affected by a domestic armed conflict that ended with the signature of firm and lasting peace agreements in 1996. We welcome the efforts made at the time by the international community and the United Nations to implement those agreements. Based on our experience, Guatemala firmly believes that the efforts of the international community must be guided by national sociopolitical and historical contexts, so as to ensure significant ownership. In other words, the parties to a reconciliation process in a post-conflict society can address the root causes of their differences to ensure that reconciliation efforts are not in vain.

Local leadership is an important element in all national reconciliation processes. It is our view that, to a large extent, local and community leaders help ensure that reconciliation processes are effective, with long-term results. In many cases, the leaders of such elected authorities as mayors, governors, community leaders, as well as faith leaders and religious leaders, set the tone to ensure that existing differences in a specific reconciliation process can be overcome. Such efforts can notably contribute to initiatives of the United Nations and to the work conducted by the special envoys or special representatives of the Secretary-General and peacekeeping operations and special political missions.

The Council has at its disposal various tools to strengthen national reconciliation processes. The concept of sustaining peace was reaffirmed through identical resolutions adopted in 2016: Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262. With this concept, the international community decided to address in any conflict situation the observance of and respect for human rights, the furthering of sustainable development, all under a comprehensive peace and security framework. There is no conventional practice that can be imposed by one State on another to obtain an immediate positive impact for social peace. Reconciliation and reparation processes take time. However, these efforts must be revitalized, using as a basis caring for the needs of the population, which, if not met, could lead to conflict, including human rights violations, the denial of opportunities and social exclusion.

Last but not least, we should recall the content of resolution 1325 (2000), which stresses the importance

of women as essential stakeholders in conflict resolution. Women are agents of positive change, efficient administrators and experts on the realities of their immediate environments. Accordingly, their involvement in peace and reconciliation processes, as agents of reconciliation, is essential.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Ms. Mwangi (Kenya): I would like to begin by commending the United Kingdom for initiating today's timely and important discussion in which we are exploring implementable actions to rally the multilateral community around nationally-owned and nationally-led reconciliation processes.

National reconciliation is a transitional-justice phenomenon and a global endeavour. Countries whose values support entrenching democracy allow spaces for national reconciliation forums. It is therefore beneficial to have discussions and regular exchanges that draw on best practices and address persistent challenges that indeed include, but also go beyond, the conflict-affected countries. Effective national reconciliation processes are important tools that help an entire nation to collectively and inclusively address important national issues, including moments of remembrance and commemoration.

The protection of witnesses, victims and individuals at risk against reprisal or intimidation is crucial in order to give credibility to the process and promote popular participation. Related legal reforms also allow for efficiency and accountability. National truth and reconciliation commissions play a critical role. The diverse character of such commissions, which involves all ethnicities, regions, religious groups and political viewpoints, will ensure broad acceptance in the population.

Drawing on well-established traditional mediation and reconciliation processes ensures the acceptance of a reconciliation process among the populace. The identification and integration of key players, including trusted faith leaders and community leaders, is important in ensuring that national, traditional and local-level reconciliation initiatives work coherently and inclusively to ensure sustainability. It is also important to create space and integrate other initiatives that come from local actors, civil society and academia in order to support national reconciliation. Schools and universities are important partners. Given the

sensitivities surrounding national reconciliation, great attention needs to be paid to the technical aspects of reconciliation processes, such as the archiving of data. We welcome the Council's initiative to have representatives from civil society and academia as today's key briefers.

Allow me to share a few practical lessons learned from Kenya's experience. Following our 2017 elections, His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta and the leader of the opposition, The Honourable Mr. Raila Odinga, agreed to form a national reconciliation process referred to as "the handshake" and the Building Bridges Initiative. That has significantly transformed Kenya's sociopolitical and economic landscape and confirms that effective leadership is key to exemplifying the path to peace. The handshake has put the country on the path to reconciliation, created space for the resumption of daily socioeconomic activities and set us on the path to creating a united Kenya for all generations, today and in the future.

The Building Bridges Initiative is an ongoing process that focuses on addressing various forms of antagonism and competition, the challenge of ensuring inclusivity, the devolution of Government services, enhancing safety and security, tackling corruption, fostering shared prosperity and guaranteeing the protection of rights. We are hopeful that the Initiative will translate into concrete political outcomes.

Women leaders have been both at the forefront and working behind the scenes of peacebuilding and bridge-building activities in Kenya. More than 200 women have also been trained and are actively engaged in the mediation of community conflicts across various counties, including the women-led Embrace Women Building Bridges for Kenya movement, which is one of the grass-roots implementation strategies of the handshake initiative.

In conclusion, the role of the international community should be one of support, at the request of respective States Members of the United Nations, in order to build the capacities of national and grass-roots conflict resolution and reconciliation initiatives. We commend the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, as highlighted by the various briefers, for their investments in national reconciliation processes. Financial and technical support gain value when approached from a national ownership perspective. The mandates of truth and

reconciliation commissions should remain under the purview of Member States so as to allow for a timeline that enables a comprehensive reconciliation process. The Security Council can systematically and contextually integrate nationally led reconciliation processes into its work within the broader framework of transitional justice.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil): I thank the United Kingdom for organizing this important debate on the role of reconciliation in sustaining peace. I also thank the briefers for their invaluable reflections.

Brazil has a long-standing history of advocacy for the mainstreaming of peacebuilding in the United Nations. While reaffirming our support for this agenda, I would like to further explore two topics.

The importance of reconciliation was underscored in the 2016 twin General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. The twin resolutions were the result of a collective understanding that sustaining peace requires more than the containment of hostilities through the maintenance of fragile ceasefire agreements. Indeed, the concept of sustaining peace entails a commitment to broader stabilization and recovery, both of which require the long-term engagement of the international community. Lasting peace comes when we address the root causes of conflicts and strengthen the drivers of peace, including through prevention, mediation and reconciliation efforts. By helping to mend the gravest fractures in the social fabric of conflict-affected communities, reconciliation plays an important role in sustaining peace. The core of reconciliation lies in promoting social unity and inclusion, based on the common vision of society. Ensuring an equitable distribution of peace dividends among all segments of the population is also key for reconciliation.

Brazil has supported post-conflict reconciliation efforts in countries across many different regions, from Asia to Latin America. Those experiences have made it clear that there is no single template for successful reconciliation. National ownership is essential to ensuring that reconciliation processes relate to the unique circumstances of each country. That said, the Security Council does have a responsibility to support national-led reconciliation efforts, especially when

they represent a critical priority of transition settings and a crucial threshold for stabilization and lasting peace. It is also paramount that the Security Council guarantee that the support of the United Nations for reconciliation efforts is fully aligned with nationally defined peacebuilding and development priorities. There are inextricable links between reconciliation and other peacebuilding elements, such as economic revitalization, the reintegration of demobilized combatants and vulnerable populations, security sector reform and promoting and protecting the rights of women, youth and children.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate once again the growing importance of the peacebuilding architecture to the effectiveness of United Nations efforts in terms of peace and security. To mention but one concrete example, last year the Peacebuilding Fund made a decisive contribution to the achievement of peace in the Central African Republic by financing the African Union-led mediation initiative that led to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. While advising the Council during the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the Peacebuilding Commission also provided its own specialized perspective, emphasizing the role of the political process and the women and peace and security agenda. The added value of the Peacebuilding Commission's advice comes from its universal composition and capacity to focus on the foundations of peace. Founded in the twenty-first century, the Peacebuilding Commission seems to be more adaptable to discussing peace efforts from a broader perspective, seeking to achieve nationally owned solutions to contemporary peace and security challenges.

With that in mind, Brazil would like to strongly encourage the Security Council to seek the specialized advice of the Peacebuilding Commission during discussions on the mandates of all peacekeeping operations and special political missions. From our perspective, greater coordination between these institutions could bring about positive change in favour of more inclusive peace and reconciliation processes.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mrs. Zappia (Italy): We thank the United Kingdom for organizing this open debate. We also thank the Secretary-General and today's briefers.

Italy aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Experience has shown that recourse to the peaceful prevention and settlement of disputes is the best and most cost-effective solution in promoting peace and security. There is no single recipe for success. Given that every conflict and ensuing settlement is different, so too the related reconciliation process may vary. Nevertheless, we need to take into account a few elements.

First, reconciliation is a long-term process that takes time and cannot be rushed. It applies not only to victims and perpetrators but to everyone in society. It must therefore be nationally owned and not imposed. It must take place at all levels, from national to grass roots, and be inclusive. Local communities, faith leaders and civil society play an essential role. Their unique position enables them to engage and represent large segments of society.

Women's participation in particular is crucial to guaranteeing such inclusivity. Today, however, too few women are involved in reconciliation and mediation efforts. In order to address those limitations, Italy launched the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network. We are proud of the results it has achieved so far. New members have joined; the first two local antennas, in Cyprus and Turkey, have been established; training, capacity-building and networking opportunities have been provided; and fruitful synergies with the United Nations, the African Union and other regional networks have developed. The latest achievement is the creation of the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks, which successfully launched in New York in September.

Secondly, in order for peace to be lasting, there must be a linkage between national and local reconciliation initiatives. Italy firmly believes in the essential contributions that local authorities and communities can make to reconciliation processes, and I would mention Libya and Mali as examples in that regard. Religious leaders and civil society have proven to be key partners. One such example is the support of the Comunità di Sant'Egidio for the Central African Republic peace process, aiming to carefully balance its work on the need to ensure accountability without jeopardizing the final outcome of the reconciliation process. Another

example was the key role of the National Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the recent political crisis in that country. As a national best practice, I would like to recall the activity of the Italian non-governmental organization Rondine Cittadella della Pace, an organization committed to reducing global armed conflicts by educating young generations in conflict resolution, track-two diplomacy and the promotion of peace and human rights.

Finally, to make reconciliation an effective tool, we must continue to look at this process in a systematic and comprehensive way, both as the Organization and as Member States. In drafting the mandates of peace operations, for example, actionable and precise deliverables should be associated with reconciliation activities, in particular linking national and local perspectives. The Peacebuilding Commission could also serve as an important platform to monitor this process. The review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2020 may also serve as an opportunity to reinforce that role. As a Member State, our contribution is of the utmost importance. I refer to our action as a troop-contributing country, a function in which our ability to dialogue and bring together opposing sides could make a tangible difference in reconciliation processes.

Let me conclude by recalling the fifth edition of the Mediterranean Dialogue, which we will host in Rome on 6 and 7 December, as an example of our tireless efforts to create opportunities and platforms for dialogue and reconciliation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Vaultier Mathias (Portugal): Allow me to congratulate the United Kingdom on convening this timely debate. Portugal fully acknowledges the importance of reconciliation in ensuring that peace agreements take root, that conflict does not recur and that the foundations are laid for sustainable peace. Our contribution more directly to reconciliation processes in East Timor and Angola provided valuable lessons.

Successful examples of reconciliation are present on every continent. Some current Security Council members have remarkable first-hand experience. Yet, despite such successes, the forces of separation and conflict continue to destroy families, tear apart communities, destabilize States and spread insecurity.

Reconciliation rebuilds, or creates anew, the social, economic and political projects that bind societies together. As such, it cannot be an afterthought following a peace agreement. It must be integrated into the policy framework from the outset in any peace effort. The Peacebuilding Commission has an important role to play through the development of integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery. Its capacity to coordinate relevant actors, to ensure catalytic funding through the Peacebuilding Fund and to mobilize other appropriate financing must also be seized and strengthened.

Reconciliation must rely on national appropriation, with the involvement of the whole of society. Bringing justice to individuals and communities affected by conflict can play a central role in overcoming hatred and in fostering recovery. Transitional justice tools, such as truth commissions, independent fact-finding missions and arbitration mechanisms, have proved to be effective. We should learn from such best practices to address the singularity of every post-conflict scenario.

The role of women in reconciliation merits particular attention. Resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, remains a milestone in that regard. Portugal is now implementing its third national action plan on implementing resolution 1325 (2000). We call on all Member States to develop their own action plans, supporting the role of women in peacebuilding, including reconciliation. To that same end, we also participate in the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network.

The role of young people, too, cannot be overstated. Last June, Portugal organized in Lisbon the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth 2019 and Youth Forum Lisboa+21, which resulted in the adoption of the Lisbon+21 Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes by both Governments and youth representatives. That document acknowledges young people's contribution to peace processes and conflict prevention and resolution.

Allow me to end on this note of hope regarding the imperative need to give voice to young people in peace processes for, as much as reconciliation may be a post-conflict necessity, through youth participation, it also becomes a powerful tool for conflict prevention, embodying our common goal of sustaining a future of peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Namibia.

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption by the United Kingdom of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. I thank you for organizing today's open debate on this important topic.

If one looks at the never-ending list of unresolved conflicts and the amount of time that this Council spends annually on debating and seeking resolution to conflicts, please forgive me for drawing the conclusion that peace must be boring. Otherwise, how do we explain the persistent presence of conflicts. Of course, we recognize the seriousness of this matter and we therefore want to begin our intervention by highlighting that for peace to prevail, conflicts should have been prevented in the first place.

To that end, early warning and intelligence gathering are most crucial. For those to be successful, the need for dialogue between aggrieved parties is of the utmost importance. We recognize that the success of dialogue is linked to the parties' desire to resolve conflict. Maintaining peace after such negotiations would require ongoing dialogue to assist with reconciling the parties.

Reconciliation has long been recognized as an essential step that countries must take in their path to achieve full peace and stability after violence and conflicts. If we want to ensure that conflicts do not re-emerge or reignite, some form of reconciliation between parties must take place. Reconciliation is part and parcel of any peacebuilding process. Reconciliation requires that structural injustices in the political, social, judicial and economic spheres be addressed. Reconciliation can take different forms, most notably truth and reconciliation commissions and court systems. The United Nations has long taken a leading role in promoting and ensuring reconciliation.

At independence, Namibia faced a daunting task of reconciliation and nation-building, subsequent to the collapse of the apartheid system, which thrived on the principle of divide and rule. Namibia was fortunate to have had United Nations Special Representatives in the persons of Sean MacBride of Ireland and Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, among others, who, together with the United Nations Transition Assistance Group, worked tirelessly to bring about an internationally acceptable transition to independence for Namibia.

My country had to go back to the basics to ensure that Namibia could enjoy freedom, peace and stability, while holding hands as “one Namibia, one Nation”. Today we are proud that out of two warring factions during our liberation struggle, Namibia has succeeded in integrating those who were fighting on the side of the apartheid South African Government with the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia into one unified national defence force.

With the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2005, the United Nations further cemented the importance of peacebuilding and reconciliation. The aim of the Commission is to propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery, to bring together all the relevant actors and to marshal resources. The Commission notably advocates for and ensures the inclusion of young people and women in peacebuilding processes, two essential actors in peace and reconciliation processes.

However, Namibia wishes to caution that, while the need to promote dialogue in reconciling parties cannot be overemphasized, the impact of external parties in such processes should not be ignored. There are real dangers that the vested interests of external parties could jeopardize reconciliation processes in some cases.

As Namibia prepares to mark 30 years of independence in March next year, we take pride in the steps we have taken to ensure our smooth transition to an independent, free State. With the essential help of the United Nations and the international community at large, our reconciliation process has by and large been a successful one. That success is notably demonstrated by the fact that we will hold our sixth presidential and general elections next week.

While some countries continue to be plagued by conflict and violence around the world, notably in the Middle East and on the African continent, others are emerging from them. Reconciliation processes should form an essential element of any peace process and should include women. Reconciliation in different forms allows for wounds to be healed and truth to be spoken. It remains a fundamental step towards ensuring a country’s peace, security, harmony and prosperity.

The President: I now welcome to the Council the Ambassador of Pakistan, who will be speaking in the Council for the first time in his current mandate.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): First of all, allow me to congratulate the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency for this month and on organizing today’s debate.

Reconciliation is an important thematic area in post-conflict peacebuilding. I recall participating in a debate on national reconciliation in this Chamber in 2004 (S/PV.4903). I welcome the resumption of the consideration of this important issue.

We would also like to thank Secretary-General Guterres and Mr. Özerdem for their briefings.

As we approach the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations next year, we should not forget that the United Nations itself is a symbol of reconciliation. It is an Organization that was born from the conviction that animosity and discord can indeed be put to rest and that nations can rise above their differences to build a shared future. The development of peace and cooperation in Europe following two devastating world wars is an illustration and example of the benefits of political reconciliation. I must add that I am sure that Brexit will not reverse that.

We have made some progress over the years in reconciling conflicts, such as in Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Pakistani peacekeepers have contributed to bringing protracted wars and conflicts like those to an end. Such efforts should be maintained, avoiding, however, a one-size-fits-all approach. Besides being a leading troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping, Pakistan has also been a member of the Peacebuilding Commission since its inception in 2005. I would like to share some key points based on our experience.

First, nationally owned reconciliation processes firmly anchored in the principles of inclusiveness and victim-centred transitional justice offer the best hope of rebuilding and sustaining peace. Secondly, reconciliation is an extended process and should not replace accountability; both processes should be mutually reinforcing. Thirdly, inclusivity is key to advancing national peacebuilding processes. All communities must be taken on board and their concerns addressed judiciously. Fourthly, development is an essential, yet insufficient, part of rebuilding peace in communities ravaged by conflict. The root causes of conflict need to be identified and addressed.

Pakistan has supported an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace process. With the mutual release of hostages and prisoners yesterday, we hope that the peace process will be quickly revived. Furthermore, we are host to 3 million Afghan refugees. They should return home and have a voice in the intra-Afghan reconciliation process that we hope will start soon. The international community must support the early and dignified return of Afghan refugees.

As conflicts continue across the globe, reconciliation will remain a relevant mechanism in post-conflict peacebuilding. However, the central purpose of the United Nations is to prevent and resolve conflict to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Unfortunately, the Security Council has had an uneven record in resolving threats to and breaches of international peace and security, which is its primary mandate. Both its endeavours and their outcomes have been inconsistent. We have witnessed prolonged inaction and silence in some cases.

In particular, Pakistan is deeply concerned at the absence of action by the Security Council to halt

India's violations of human rights and Security Council resolutions in the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir. In contrast, the Council has been propelled in other instances to rapidly resort to sanctions and enforcement action. Resolving that issue will require political will and commitment on the part of the international community. Given that less than 0.5 per cent of global defence expenditures is invested in peace, it is a telling commentary on the commitment required to build peace in the world.

The President: In my national capacity, let me briefly reassure the representative of Pakistan that the United Kingdom will remain a strong European economic and security player after Brexit.

Resuming my capacity as President of the Council, I would like to thank our interpreters for their forbearance. There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting and I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m. sharp.

The meeting was suspended at 1.05 p.m.