



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8546th meeting
 Wednesday, 12 June 2019, 10 a.m.
 New York

Provisional

President: Sheikh Al Sabah (Kuwait)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
France	Mr. Delattre
Germany	Mr. Schulz
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
South Africa	Mr. Matjila
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Conflict prevention and mediation

Letter dated 31 May 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/456)

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Conflict prevention and mediation

Letter dated 31 May 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/456)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Her Excellency Ms. Mary Robinson and His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

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/2019/456, which contains a letter dated 31 May 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

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

The Secretary-General: I thank Kuwait and His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, for this opportunity to brief the Council.

I welcome two representatives of The Elders, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and former President Mary Robinson. I also see before me the former President of Colombia, His Excellency Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón. I welcome them to the Chamber today and thank them for contributing with their personal wisdom to support to the debate.

Conflict prevention and mediation are two of the most important tools at our disposal to reduce human suffering. When we act early and are united, we can successfully prevent crises from escalating, saving lives, reducing suffering and fulfilling the most fundamental mandate of the United Nations, as set out in the Preamble to the Charter. We are working with

parties to conflict and other partners in regions and countries around the world to further these aims.

There are some encouraging signs, including successful constitutional transfers of power in Mali and Madagascar. The rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan have also created a sense of renewed hope. And after decades, the name issue in south-eastern Europe was resolved with an agreement between Athens and Skopje, allowing the designation of the Republic of North Macedonia to be internationally recognized.

Elsewhere, we face serious challenges to our efforts but we continue to push on all tracks. The agreement reached in Stockholm by the parties to the conflict in Yemen was an important step that must now move to a negotiated settlement. My Special Envoy is working extensively with the parties to support the implementation of the Al-Hudaydah agreement and to prevent a return to open conflict as a basic condition to allow political negotiations to take place afterwards.

In the Central African Republic, the United Nations is helping the parties to implement the African Union-mediated Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, conducting robust operations to ensure armed groups' adherence to the agreement and facilitating local peace accords. And in Burkina Faso, we are working with a wide range of national stakeholders, including civil society and women's groups, to strengthen local infrastructures for peace as part of the response to rising sectarian violence and terrorism.

Despite these efforts, peace faces enormous obstacles. Divisions in the international community mean that wars continue to rage as external actors dither or even fuel the violence. Civilians pay the price. The fragmentation of non-State armed groups and militias causes even greater chaos. There is a resurgence of populism and policies that contribute to resentment, marginalization and extremism, even in societies that are not at war. There are attempts in some countries to roll back human rights and the progress that has been made over recent decades on gender and inclusion. Space for civil society is shrinking.

My Special Representative in Libya has detailed to the Council the heavy toll in human lives resulting from armed clashes and fighting in that country and the

lack of moral motivation to end the war. He is working for a ceasefire and a return to the negotiating table.

The continuing crisis in Venezuela and its humanitarian impact are a grave concern. I support ongoing international efforts to find a peaceful, negotiated solution reached by the main Venezuelan political actors, and have been closely following the process in Norway. My good offices remain available to support serious negotiations, when required, by the parties.

In Syria, we face a scenario of ongoing cycles of instability, violence and suffering. We cannot have a sustainable peace if different parties continue to conduct military operations in the country. There is no military solution to the conflict. Without a comprehensive political solution, based on resolution 2254 (2015), that addresses the root causes of instability, Syria will never know stability or peace. My Special Envoy for Syria is working to build trust with all parties, to signal that a future that takes into account the legitimate needs and aspirations of all Syrians is possible, and to launch a credible and balanced constitutional committee to open the door to a Syrian-led political process, facilitated by the United Nations.

Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations sets out a broad range of tools for parties to use to prevent and resolve conflict. These include

“negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peace means of their own choice”.

I urge Governments to make full use of these tools and the Council to use its own authority to call on parties to pursue them.

My own good offices and those of my envoys aim to help parties peacefully resolve differences. Members of my High-level Advisory Board on Mediation have provided discreet counsel to me and my representatives on various political processes. Our mediation advisers on the Standby Team have supported processes from Afghanistan to South Sudan, Papua New Guinea to Syria. We have also deepened our strategic and operational partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, with a particular emphasis on Africa. From the Central African Republic to South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Madagascar, increased interaction with the African Union has

fostered trust and enabled us to support joint approaches and viable solutions.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia is working to resolve transboundary issues and to implement our Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Our peacekeeping operations and special political missions undertake vital conflict prevention and resolution efforts. In some situations, the prospect or application of well-targeted sanctions regimes, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, can help move parties towards peace.

Sustainable development is an end in itself, but it is also one of the most effective tools we have to prevent conflict. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is our blueprint for creating resilient, stable societies and for addressing the root causes of violence of all kinds. This means a strong focus on inclusivity, with a special emphasis on mainstreaming women’s rights and gender equality across our prevention and mediation work.

Progress on women’s participation in formal peace processes is still lagging. We will continue to use creative strategies to advance women’s participation, building on previous efforts, including the Syrian Women’s Advisory Board and the Yemeni Women’s Technical Advisory Group. Regional women mediators’ networks like the African Union’s FemWise-Africa network are an important development. My High-level Advisory Board on Mediation is available to support their efforts.

Some 600 million young people living in fragile and conflict-affected States have a vital contribution to make to mediation and peacebuilding processes. The first International Symposium for Youth Participation in Peace Processes, held earlier this year, was an important step forward. Independent actors and non-governmental organizations, including The Elders, who are represented here today, are a critical complementary element to our efforts.

The human and financial costs of conflict are high and rising. Forced displacement is at the highest levels since the Second World War and hunger is resurgent after years of decline. We cannot afford to reduce the energy and resources we invest in prevention and mediation.

But let us not fool ourselves. Prevention and mediation will not work without broader political efforts. I urge Council members and all Member States

to strive for greater unity so as to ensure that prevention and mediation efforts are as effective as possible. That is the only way to meet our responsibilities to the peoples we serve.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Robinson.

Ms. Robinson: It is a privilege to speak to the Council today at this important meeting on conflict prevention and mediation — two issues that lie at the very heart of the mission of the Security Council and the wider multilateral rules-based system.

I am speaking today in my capacity as Chair of The Elders, the group of independent global leaders founded by Nelson Mandela, who work for peace, justice and human rights. I am honoured, too, to be here alongside someone who needs no introduction to people in the Chamber: His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General, who today serves as one of the Deputy Chairs of The Elders, together with Graça Machel. I am also happy to be joined by President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón.

On behalf of all the Elders, I would like to sincerely thank His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al Hamad Al Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait, for extending the invitation to address the Council as part of Kuwait's presidency.

I recall when serving as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes of Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2013 and 2014, how invaluable it was to have a united Security Council to report to. I know that President Santos had the same appreciation of the support of the Security Council for his work on peace in Colombia. The Elders want to urge all members of the Security Council today to approach the topics under discussion in the same spirit of inclusive dialogue and willingness to work for compromise and consensus in the interests of peace. We know that the world is more divided and polarised at the moment, but the Council has a unique responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, and we encourage the 10 elected members to play as full a part as possible in their work.

When Nelson Mandela founded The Elders in 2007, he charged us with a precise mandate: "Support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is

conflict and inspire hope where there is despair." I believe it is testament to both Mandela's perspicacity but also to the grim realities of our world that his words continue to feel as urgent in 2019 as they did when he uttered them on stage in Johannesburg a dozen years ago — not least when we think of conflict prevention and mediation.

Fear, conflict and despair are all too obvious, from the streets of Khartoum to the townships of Harare; the bombed-out hospitals of Idlib to the ruined schools of Yemen; and the slums of Gaza to the Rohingya refugee camps of Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. In all these cases and so many more the world over, the Security Council should be seen as an instrument of deliverance, a defender of rights and a provider of protection.

But too often over the decades the Council and, in particular, its five permanent members have failed to live up to their responsibilities and favoured realpolitik or short-term power stratagems rather than meeting the solemn commitments outlined in the Charter of the United Nations. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in the repeated use of the veto by certain permanent members on draft resolutions aimed to prevent mass atrocities, including the use of chemical weapons on civilians. In the words of my immediate predecessor as Chair of The Elders, the late and sorely-missed Kofi Annan, "you cannot put down a veto, paralyse operations, create a stalemate and not propose a way forward".

To propose positive ways forward in our deliberations today, I would like to focus on three specific areas where we, The Elders, believe that the Council can play a proactive and positive role on conflict.

The first is the importance of prevention. Everyone here in the Chamber will recognize that prevention is by far the most effective way to deal with conflicts. But that should not be narrowly viewed in terms of securing immediate security and stability or distorted to justify deals with unscrupulous leaders who pay lip service to peace and mediation as a way to retain power without ever taking the necessary steps to address the root causes of conflict and division.

Inclusive government and a commitment to justice and human rights are also crucial. Violations of or disrespect for the fundamental values of human rights and undemocratic and unaccountable actions by long-serving leaders have often festered to become bigger

crises. I have also felt for a long time that insufficient attention has been paid to the role and voice of women on the ground in terms of conflict prevention. The Council has shown leadership on that issue in past years, particularly through the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). It should now redouble its collective efforts to make sure that women's perspectives and experiences are reflected in the mainstream of peacekeeping and conflict prevention policy. I echo the strong emphasis of the Secretary-General today on the full participation of women. Overall, the international community has too often not paid enough attention to all those issues, and the citizens of conflict-blighted countries and regions have paid far too high a price for that neglect.

The second is climate change. Together with nuclear weapons, there is no greater existential threat to our planet than climate change. The United Nations has shown commendable leadership on the issue, brokering the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015 and ensuring that climate is an integral element of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Elders are pleased to see that the issue of climate change continues to be of concern to the Security Council. We feel that if the Council were to adopt a more holistic approach to conflict prevention, including climate change, this would both make it more effective and support the mandate of other parts of the United Nations system. We support the creation of an institutional focal point, in the form of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General, to pull together expertise on climate change from across and beyond the United Nations in order to help the Council assess the diverse, complex and shifting impacts of climate change on conflicts.

The third is the impact of technology. Another aspect of a more long-term and more holistic view of the causes of conflict and how to prevent it needs to be the impact of technology, including artificial intelligence and automation. As Elders, we make no claims to be part of the vanguard of the debate here, but again I would recall a wise epigram from Kofi Annan: "You are never too young to lead, and never too old to learn." We need to listen to and learn from the young people — the digital natives who are fluent in the brave new world of technology but who also risk paying the price for progress as previously secure jobs and career paths become obsolete.

Youth unemployment is especially high in the Middle East and Africa and has been a driver of social unrest in many countries. Similarly, social media, while

being a powerful tool for connecting people around the world, has also been used as a tool for enabling violent extremism and for spreading misinformation, which has contributed to violence and social unrest. There is, additionally, an urgent need to develop global norms and rules around cyberconflict prevention. Currently, there is no international mechanism to regulate offensive cyberthreats, and States and non-State actors alike are able to operate with a large degree of impunity. As a minimum, we need to develop a process whereby States and Governments become more transparent about their cybercapabilities and deterrence mechanisms. The international community must not wait until a major tragedy occurs to develop those rules. We believe that the Security Council is uniquely placed to lead the efforts to find a progressive, inclusive consensus.

I thank you again, Mr. President, for the opportunity to raise those issues with the Council today. It is now my pleasure to hand over to my colleague, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who will expand upon more of our priorities and concerns.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ms. Robinson for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ban.

Mr. Ban: Let me begin by echoing the words of my colleague, the Chair of The Elders, Mary Robinson, and thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address this gathering.

As a former Secretary-General, I have the utmost respect for the institution of the Security Council and the principles and values it is designed to uphold. When the Council can cooperate and speak with a strong common voice, its decisions can have a decisive impact. That strong, common voice is needed more than ever at this current time, when the deceptive allure of populism and isolationism is growing across all continents, from North and South America to Africa, Asia and Europe.

Faced with the complex, multifaceted and gravely serious challenges, from nuclear proliferation to climate change, and a radical transformation of our economic and social paradigms, it is perhaps understandable that many people from everyday walks of life feel overwhelmed and seek solace in simplified narratives of a bygone golden age when they had a sense of being in control of their individual and national destinies.

What is profoundly irresponsible, however, is for politicians — especially but not exclusively in

democratic societies — to collude in or deliberately stoke those illusions for their own aims of securing and sustaining power, in full knowledge that no one country, however powerful, will be able to meet those global challenges on its own. That is why I believe it is absolutely essential for global peace and security that the States Members of the United Nations, and especially those that have the honour to serve as members of the Security Council, understand and meet their responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations and act in the service of all humankind rather than the narrow fields of national, ideological or sectarian interests.

The Council needs to be bold and assert its collective voice to meet common challenges, while heeding the words of my illustrious predecessor as Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld:

“It is when we all play safe that we create a world of utmost insecurity. It is when we all play safe that fatality will lead us to our doom. It is in the dark shade of courage alone that the spell can be broken.”

The Council has always been intended as a forum for collective engagement in the broader interests of peace and security, as well as an opportunity for member States to reflect their capitals’ perspective on the issue under discussion.

In the humble view of The Elders, based on our substantial collective experience of working for and within the international system, the working methods of the Council could be improved to encourage Council members to agree on a joint common position to address conflicts in their early stages. The Council should explore ways to be more efficient and effective and to assert its collective voice through timely and strong statements. Whether it is a presidential statement or a press statement, it requires a consensus view. However, that is unrealistic and illogical when a binding resolution of the Security Council requires only nine affirmative votes without vetoes. It needs to speak for and to the whole of the United Nations, rather than being constrained by the respective agendas and priorities in the national capitals of its member States.

Building on the remarks of President Robinson, I would like to highlight three more areas where I feel the Council can show effective leadership to support the work of the Secretary-General and improve general conditions for peace and conflict resolution.

First is the importance of prevention. The Secretary-General’s emphasis on the priority to be given to prevention is very welcome, and Member States must ensure that the work of the United Nations for prevention and peacebuilding is properly supported and funded. Council members should do more to support the Secretary-General in using his good offices to help prevent and reduce the threat of conflict. Council members should also recognize that the Council’s work on peace and security is undermined when its members subvert the United Nations own peace envoys and peace processes. The human cost of those machinations is all too painful to see, with Libya and Yemen standing out as just two grim examples.

Secondly, I turn to regional institutions. Strong multilateral regional institutions are essential for the maintenance of peace and security, both as forums for dialogue and as mechanisms for economic and political cooperation between States. Positive examples include the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. By contrast, the absence of dialogue among States or inclusive forums for dialogue in the Middle East is one of the reasons for the persistence and recurrence of conflict there.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend our host, the State of Kuwait, for its ongoing commitment to and support for the values that have historically underpinned the Gulf Cooperation Council. I would urge all other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council to act in the same spirit to restore that body to its vital role as a guarantor of regional stability, governed by mutual respect for national sovereignty and a shared understanding of common challenges.

The role of regional organizations in preventing and resolving conflict should be strengthened, not only in the Middle East but across the wider world. Greater coordination between the Security Council and regional organizations would also be beneficial.

Third is the nuclear threat. The risks of nuclear conflict are higher than they have been in several decades. As Mary Robinson so rightly said, nuclear weapons and climate change pose two of the most severe existential threats to life on Earth as we know it. When it comes to nuclear non-proliferation, the international community is confronted with two serious challenges, namely, the Iranian nuclear development programmes and the need to secure the complete denuclearization of North Korea.

Regarding the Iranian nuclear issue, I am deeply concerned by the United States decision to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, because it not only weakens the regional stability of the Middle East but also sends the wrong signal to ongoing negotiations over North Korea's nuclear issues. Unfortunately, the negotiations between the United States and North Korea have come to a deadlock since the failure of the Hanoi summit last February. I support the United States Government's efforts to realize the complete denuclearization of North Korea. In that context, we should maintain and faithfully comply with the sanction measures imposed by the Security Council on North Korea. I sincerely hope that all the States Members of the United Nations faithfully implement the sanction measures.

On the other hand, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme, actual food shortages in North Korea might reach around 1.5 million tons. Considering the fact that North Korea has suffered chronic food shortages over the past two decades, the situation seems to be worsening, with no support from the international community. In view of that, the Government of the Republic of Korea has announced that it would contribute \$8 million to United Nations agencies to help North Korea address the current humanitarian situation. I sincerely hope that the currently deadlocked negotiations will resume among the parties concerned as soon as possible.

But beyond those two regional issues, there is also the very real risk that the whole architecture of arms control and nuclear non-proliferation that was built up during the decades of superpower confrontation may collapse through a combination of neglect, hubris and ill-founded threat analysis. That issue goes to the very heart of the Security Council. Its permanent members are all nuclear-armed States, and they therefore possess a uniquely heavy responsibility to develop effective processes of non-proliferation and disarmament.

Yet the failure of the five permanent members to make progress on their disarmament commitments under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) risks undermining the NPT, which has been a highly effective multilateral mechanism for preventing proliferation. It is in the interest of the five permanent members to get serious about disarmament if they wish to maintain the near-universal international commitment to preventing

nuclear proliferation, particularly in the lead-up to next year's NPT Review Conference. The consequences of failure do not bear contemplation.

I hope that in our contributions, The Elders have highlighted opportunities for progress, as well as challenges to be overcome. We look forward now to a stimulating interactive discussion with the Council members, and express gratitude again for the privilege to take part in this debate.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Ban for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

At the outset, I thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his valuable briefing and assure him that the State of Kuwait fully supports him in his efforts to improve the mechanisms of the United Nations and enhance their efficiency with a view to reducing the risks and threats confronting our world today. We especially support his call for a surge in diplomacy and the enhancement of conflict prevention and mediation measures as part of his reforms of the pillars of peace and security to render them more coherent and comprehensive.

I also thank The Elders for their presence with us today, for we will surely benefit from the wisdom and expertise that they have acquired over decades of hard work in various decision-making positions as they have striven to improve the lives of millions of people around the world. Among them we have an advocate for women's rights, human rights and a former President of her country. We also have a former Secretary-General of the United Nations, who succeeded in putting in place the goals for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We also have a leader who was able to make peace and end 50 years of conflict in his own country, for which he was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize. I welcome Ms. Mary Robinson, Mr. Ban Ki-moon and Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, and I would like to thank Ms. Robinson and Mr. Ban Ki-moon for their valuable and enlightening briefings on our topic today.

We begin today's meeting on conflict prevention and mediation, under the agenda item of the maintenance of international peace and security, by quoting the first paragraph of Article 1 of the Charter of the United

Nations, which sets out the purposes of the United Nations as follows.

“To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.”

The State of Kuwait has called this meeting today to provide the Council with an opportunity to evaluate its role in conflict prevention and mediation and to look at ways to strengthen that role with a view to addressing security, political and humanitarian crises in their early stages before they escalate, get complicated and become threats to international peace and security. In the past few years, the frequency of the crises confronting our world has increased. They have become more complex and intertwined than ever before, but it is certain that we could have addressed some of them earlier and prevented their escalation had we used the tools available to the Council in an effective way.

The Charter of the United Nations provides us with many tools that encourage conflict resolution by peaceful means, especially Chapter VI, which puts steps in place for resolving any dispute between parties through negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement, or by resorting to regional agencies and organizations as well as other peaceful means of their choice. Chapter VI also stresses the importance of the preventive role of the Security Council. It gives the Council the right to call on parties to conflicts to resolve their disputes by the aforementioned means and to investigate any dispute or situation that might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute, in order to determine whether its continuation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.

In Chapter VIII, the Charter encourages the peaceful resolution of local conflicts through arrangements with regional and subregional organizations, as they have historical knowledge of such conflicts and geographic proximity to them. In that regard, I would like to commend the important cooperation between the Security Council and the African Union in addressing a

number of the issues confronting the African continent. Tomorrow, as part of our efforts to form a similar model of cooperation, Kuwait will hold a meeting on cooperation between the Security Council and the League of Arab States. We believe that it is timely, given the turmoil and instability that a number of Arab countries are currently facing.

As part of our discussion today, we should highlight the important role of the Secretary-General, based on Article 99 of the Charter, which confers on the Secretary-General an inherent right and responsibility to play a role in preventing conflicts through his good offices or those of his Special Envoys and Special Representatives in any conflict zone. The Secretary-General has made mediation a priority, and we commend the fact that he has established a High-level Advisory Board on Mediation as a tool for conflict prevention, which we should all support, as it will unquestionably save us a great deal of trouble, sorrow, pain and resources, including financial resources. Billions of dollars are spent every year to contain crises through peacekeeping operations or to address their consequences and implications, including on the humanitarian front.

The challenges that many mediation efforts confront are local, regional and international, and sometimes all of them at once. Mediation efforts must therefore be comprehensive and deal with the root causes of conflicts and their various political, security, development, economic and social aspects. They must also address the issues of living conditions, good governance and respect for human rights, among other things, and must therefore work fast to ensure that disputes do not escalate. Different views must be taken into account, and work must be done behind the scenes to gain the trust of all the parties to a conflict by adopting an honest, neutral and clear approach, free of private agendas, with a view to achieving a comprehensive and sustainable resolution of the conflict. I want to commend the Secretary-General and his Special Envoys and Representatives and their teams for their efforts to resolve conflicts around the world, often without media attention.

The accumulated experience and lessons learned are sufficient to enable the Security Council to take innovative measures and steps in helping to maintaining international peace and security, and certainly there is nothing preventing the Council from taking innovative initiatives and measures for conflict prevention and mediation. In the concept note circulated to Council

members (S/2019/456, annex) we have identified some steps that could support conflict prevention and mediation efforts, including sending a small delegation of Council members to undertake mediation efforts between parties to conflicts, a practice that the Security Council has adopted in the past. Field visits by the Council to conflict zones could cover prevention and mediation. The Council could also benefit further from meetings held in various formats to discuss matters that could threaten international peace and security. Besides that, it has traditional tools such as peacekeeping operations and sanctions imposed on individuals and entities at its disposal, and those could be used in a more efficient manner to achieve the purposes of preventive diplomacy.

After reviewing these preventive tools in the Security Council, I cannot help wondering how many crises the Council could have avoided, prevented or de-escalated had it used the tools available to it in accordance with the Charter and actively pursued preventive diplomacy. A more difficult question is how many human lives and resources could have been saved had we ignored political calculations and narrow interests and instead focused on assuming our responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, including by activating these preventive tools. The Council's success in using those tools depends on the unity and consensus of its members. We have witnessed many conflicts in which the Security Council was unable to reach solutions because of the differing views of Council members and the use of the veto. Perhaps the most important issues where we have seen a division between the members of the Council and the use of the veto are the Palestinian question and the Syrian crisis.

The unity of the Security Council, especially among the five permanent members, is important to ensuring that the Council can carry out its functions and take decisions in an effective and decisive way. Confronting political, security and humanitarian challenges in our world today requires all of us to work together within the context of multilateralism. Those international challenges need international solutions.

Because Kuwait is a small State and the smallest member of the Security Council today in terms of surface area, preventive diplomacy is a main pillar of its foreign policy. We believe that dialogue is the best way to resolve conflicts based on the rules of international law and the principles and purposes of

the Charter of the United Nations. We also believe that underdevelopment and economic and social challenges are the root causes of many conflicts around the world. That is why the State of Kuwait engages in humanitarian and development diplomacy to improve the living conditions of millions of peoples throughout the world and to contribute to achieving stability for communities and countries. I assure all Council members that the State of Kuwait will remain just as they have known it — a supporter of peace as a non-permanent member of the Security Council and even outside the Council, through our diplomacy based on preventive measures, conflict prevention and the resolution of conflicts by peaceful means.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to express my admiration and gratitude to our speakers, who are all extraordinary and tireless peacemakers. The briefings delivered by Secretary-General António Guterres, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon and Ms. Mary Robinson are particularly inspiring to all of us, as they reflect their exemplary commitment. With several days left before I leave New York in order to take on new responsibilities in Paris, it is a great honour for me to broach, in their presence, one of the major questions that has mobilized all of us during the five years that I have had the privilege to spend in this role. The question is: How can the United Nations better prevent conflict? I warmly thank the Kuwaiti presidency for convening this meeting on such an important subject, and I welcome the presence of the Kuwaiti Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I would like to begin by commending the Secretary-General for giving top priority to conflict prevention. France fully supports his vision, according to which we need to do more to head off conflict. We welcome the Secretary-General's reforms, which should enable the entire United Nations system to be more effective in preventing crises. I am thinking in particular of the strengthening of United Nations mediation capacities, for example through the creation of the High-level Advisory Board on Mediation. I also note that members of the Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers are being deployed increasingly on the ground, sometimes at very short notice. Their activities, often discreet,

is immensely valuable. I would also like to highlight the indispensable work carried out by the Office of Mr. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide.

We can see that the new impetus spurred by the Secretary-General is starting to bear fruit. For example, in Madagascar last year, the mediation conducted by Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Madagascar, in close coordination with the African Union and the Southern African Development Community, made it possible to avert a political crisis that could have had tragic consequences. In that case, the unfailing commitment of the United Nations ensured that all international actors spoke with one voice, which was decisive. The elections were a success and helped to consolidate the Malagasy democracy after the upheavals that had shaken the political life of the country over the past 10 years.

I will give a second example. Early in the year, in the Central African Republic, the United Nations and the African Union facilitated the negotiation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, thanks in particular to the strong and perfectly coordinated commitment of Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Mr. Smaïl Chergui. In addition, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic played a valuable role in the negotiation process and continues to play a key role in supporting the implementation of the agreement in the difficult context with which we are all familiar. In that regard, I would like to welcome more generally the contribution of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General who support the political processes in Mali, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Middle East. Those who, in addition, are responsible for a peacekeeping mission play a vital role in promoting peace.

In addition, strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union contributes to enhancing the effectiveness of our preventive diplomacy. In Burkina Faso in 2015 and in the Gambia in 2016, the coordinated and united action of the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States was critical to success. As I have had the opportunity to say on many occasions in this Chamber, this partnership is of strategic importance to us, and we are therefore determined to give it our full support. Our mobilization concerning conflict prevention and

mediation must remain stronger than ever, because today's needs are very great.

Turning to the Middle East, the dangerous exacerbation of tensions in recent weeks in the Gulf highlights the need to defuse any risk of escalation through the gradual structuring of a regional dialogue. The efforts of France tend to that end. The regional dialogue must address all legitimate concerns that threaten the peace and security of the region and beyond. Dialogue is also necessary to promoting the implementation of political solutions in the conflicts of the region, under the auspices of the United Nations, to which the Council must lend its unanimous support. I emphasize the essential role that the countries of the region play and must play in conflict prevention. I particularly commend Kuwait's initiatives to build bridges in the region and foster dialogue.

After years of bloody conflict in Syria, and on the eve of a new humanitarian catastrophe with the ongoing Idlib offensive by the regime and its allies, there is an urgent need for us together to implement resolution 2254 (2015) to achieve a national ceasefire and a political solution in support of the efforts of Mr. Geir Pedersen, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria. Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, also has our full support, with particular regard to his work on the implementation of the Al-Hudaydah agreements, among others. I also wish to reiterate our support for Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya, with a view to reaching a ceasefire agreement in Tripoli, prior to the resumption of discussions between the parties.

The need is also very great in Africa. I will cite a few brief examples. The situation in the Sudan is extremely worrying. We are horrified by the brutal repression of peaceful protesters, the perpetrators of which will be brought to justice, and we call for the resumption of dialogue between the Transitional Military Council and the opposition. We welcome the resolute and clear position of the African Union and hope that the United Nations can fully support the mediation efforts of the African Union.

In the light of the high priority we attach to the situation in the Sahel, we are also of the view that Burkina Faso must now enjoy increased attention in the light of the challenges the country is currently facing. France therefore fully supports the process initiated

by the Secretary-General to adjust the United Nations presence on the ground. We hope that the United Nations response will be ambitious and commensurate with the expectations of the Burkina Faso authorities in the areas of humanitarian assistance and development, as well as in training security forces, respect for human rights and international humanitarian law and support for the fight against terrorism.

With regard to Cameroon, we are very concerned by the deterioration in the north-west and south-west of the country. We must all join our voices to encourage the authorities of Cameroon to launch an inclusive political dialogue, establish détente measures and deepen decentralization.

Finally, I would like to speak briefly on several challenges and issues for preventive diplomacy and mediation in the coming years.

The first challenge is the meaningful participation of women in mediation processes. We absolutely need more women mediators. In that regard, I welcome the contribution of the FemWise-Africa network, which makes it possible to deploy women mediators in the field. Mediation must also fully involve women at all stages of the process and at all levels. We know that peace agreements reached with the meaningful participation of women are stronger and more sustainable. Those same agreements must include provisions on the rights of women and children. And we are counting on the guidelines being developed by the Office of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed conflict, Virginia Gamba de Potgieter, to be able to learn all the lessons from previous mediation processes on that matter.

The second challenge is that of post-conflict peacebuilding. We should provide more support to countries and societies emerging from conflict by investing in reconciliation, transitional justice and reconstruction in order to prevent them from relapsing into crisis situations. The Peacebuilding Fund is an essential tool in that regard, and as Council members know, France fully supports it. Similarly, it is essential to continue to focus on mechanisms that detect early warning signs of potential deterioration and record specific indicators in order to help prevent relapse.

The third challenge is the impact of climate change on international security. That issue must become a central element of the conflict prevention agenda. France is firmly convinced of that point. The Security

Council, and more broadly the entire United Nations system, must have a comprehensive overview of all the dangers that the impact of climate change poses to international security. In that regard, we recommend that a report of the Secretary-General be drafted to provide a regular assessment of those risks, as well as recommendations for the development of tangible actions to respond to and prevent conflicts related to climate events.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important debate on mediation and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

We recognize the leadership of Secretary-General Guterres in advancing the United Nations mediation and conflict prevention work, including the creation of the High-level Advisory Board on Mediation. We welcome the Board's engagement in both resolving and preventing conflict. I would also like to thank the Chair and Deputy Chair of The Elders, Mary Robinson and Ban Ki-moon, for their remarks today and for the vital work they are doing to spearhead mediation and conflict resolution.

Day after day, the Council bears witness to the human toll of conflict, from Mali to Myanmar, Syria to Somalia. This year, the United Nations estimates that conflicts and disasters have affected over 130 million people across 42 countries. The affected men, women and children have an urgent need of assistance — of our assistance.

The Security Council often debates how to use this body to resolve crises. From those discussions, we have established human rights monitoring mechanisms, imposed sanctions and established peacekeeping missions. However, we rarely explore mediation as a tool in resolving conflicts, or how we might better prevent conflict in the first place and thereby save lives, as the Secretary-General and Minister Al Sabah noted.

States Members of the United Nations are contributing \$6.7 billion this year for peacekeeping, and the United States pays a quarter of that cost. But better prevention and mediation would help prevent costly peacekeeping missions and help provide an exit strategy for existing peacekeeping operations.

The United States has a long record of leading mediation efforts that have provided breakthroughs in some of the toughest conflicts, such as the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland and the Dayton

Peace Agreement that ended the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In both of those cases, the United States brought the right people into the room and served as a trusted facilitator of the agreements.

Mediation is most successful when the right set of stakeholders are engaged and the mediator is trusted. In that light, women's meaningful participation increases the likelihood of successful negotiations, reconciliation and transition processes. Collectively, the Secretariat and Security Council must do more to ensure women play an integral role in peace processes both as negotiators and mediators, as President Robinson, the Secretary-General and the Ambassador of France have all noted.

Including women in conflict resolution not only accelerates the process, but it surfaces issues that matter most to societies as a whole, making agreements more durable. According to the International Peace Institute, peace processes in which women are meaningfully included are 35 per cent more likely to last for at least 15 years.

It is also important to support local and regional mediation efforts, devolving authority to those on the ground. Let me offer Senegal as an example where the United States has worked to bolster local mediation efforts, coordinating support for a high-level political negotiation between the Senegalese Government and the secessionist movement. By providing targeted political support and funding, we have helped set the conditions that led to high-level negotiations.

There are unresolved conflicts currently on the Council's agenda that would benefit from enhanced mediation activities. In one example, improvements the Security Council has mandated for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, the peacekeeping operation in Abyei, are stalled due to a lack of progress in mediation between South Sudan and the Sudan.

Each of us should seek to strengthen the capacity of regional and subregional organizations, given their comparative advantage in securing local buy-in. The Secretary-General has called for greater convergence and cooperation in the Council as a means to support mediation, and we agree completely.

We agree that those vital and often underappreciated tools can have a transformative impact in conflicts. We urge the United Nations to lead mediation efforts within current budget parameters. Those efforts can

save billions of dollars that would be spent on conflict mitigation and, most importantly, again, can save lives by preventing or ending conflict.

The United States stands ready to continue the dialogue on doing more to effectively support the United Nations conflict resolution and mediation efforts.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China highly appreciates Kuwait's initiative in convening this meeting. I also thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing. I would like to thank in particular Their Excellencies Ms. Mary Robinson and Mr. Ban Ki-moon for their presence in the Council and for sharing their perspectives on world issues. Their speeches are inspirational.

Approximately two months ago, President Xi Jinping met with Ms. Robinson and Mr. Ban Ki-moon and other members of The Elders in Beijing. President Xi Jinping had an in-depth exchange of views with them on international issues. In the meetings, President Xi Jinping reiterated China's firm support for multilateralism and expressed China's appreciation of the efforts of The Elders members in facilitating a dialogue-based solution to conflicts.

Conflict prevention is predominantly about prevention. The concept of prevention is deeply rooted in traditional Chinese philosophy. Ancient Chinese proverbs, such as "Prepare for a rainy day" and "Take precautionary measures before disaster strikes" all highlight the importance of prevention. China supports the United Nations in strengthening conflict prevention. We support the Secretary-General's reform initiatives in the field of peace and security, including increasing the United Nations commitment and input in conflict prevention.

Conflict prevention must focus on tackling root causes. Conflicts tend to have a variety of deep-seated causes, such as extreme poverty, imbalanced development, the lack of resources and ethnic and tribal conflicts. Among them, the issue of development is of paramount importance. Countries should make development their first priority and persist in jointly promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development so as to enhance developing countries' capacity to support indigenous development and reduce or eliminate poverty on a global scale, thereby laying the foundation for conflict prevention.

Conflict prevention must adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. All countries should abide by the basic norms governing international relations, such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, non-aggression and the peaceful settlement of disputes. It is imperative to fully respect the will of the countries concerned, persist in carrying out conflict prevention under their leadership, and provide constructive assistance to them to advance their political process and achieve national reconciliation.

Conflict prevention must emphasise the role of mediation. Mediation is one of the tools for the peaceful settlement of disputes and an important means for the United Nations to carry out conflict prevention. It is necessary to formulate and implement work programmes for mediation in a targeted manner, make full use of the unique influence of the Secretary-General and the expertise of the Secretariat, and actively mediate disputes through the Special Representatives and Envoys of the Secretary-General. It is also necessary to strengthen the ability of national envoys in mediating conflicts and disputes.

Conflict prevention needs closer coordination so as to generate synergy. As the most universal, representative and authoritative intergovernmental international organization, the United Nations should play a central role in conflict prevention. All departments of the Secretariat must abide by their mandates and work in collaboration. Regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union and the League of Arab States, enjoy unique advantages in dealing with issues in their own regions and should be further supported in exercising their irreplaceable role in the prevention of regional conflicts.

As a builder and defender of world peace, China is actively committed to promoting international peace and stability and to pushing for the establishment of a new type of international relations with cooperation and mutual benefit at its core. This is seen in China's active engagement in the mediation of international or regional hotspot issues and the appointment of Special Envoys on regional issues such as those of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, to facilitate peace talks and promote political solutions. That has already produced positive results.

Our active support for the mediation work of the United Nations also includes years of donations to

United Nations prevention efforts and to the China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund, support for the Secretary-General's High-level Advisory Board on Mediation, the rapid-response system of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and other United Nations mediation mechanisms.

China will join the rest of the international community to jointly build a community with a shared future for humankind so as to make greater contributions to world peace, development and prosperity.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): Let me also thank our briefers today. The United Kingdom held an open debate on mediation during our own presidency of the Security Council in August (see S/PV.8334). We are very glad to see the Kuwaiti presidency taking the debate further, because we believe that mediation can and does work. We believe that properly deployed and executed, mediation can help parties to resolve disputes before they are allowed to spiral into darker and more entrenched cycles of violence. We also believe, as the Council recognized in its January 2018 presidential statement (S/PRST/2018/1), that mediation has to be one element of a comprehensive conflict-prevention strategy.

Ban Ki-moon talked about the importance of conflict prevention, of dealing with issues before they get out of control. I know that some members of the Security Council are concerned by any expansion of the Council's agenda. If we do not find ways of effective conflict prevention in countries not yet on our agenda where we have concerns, then we make it more likely that they will actually come onto the agenda. We therefore have to find some way of collectively resolving this dilemma. At a time when the concept of conflict prevention can prompt different responses from Security Council members, I believe that the question of the importance of mediation is something that unites us all, around which we all can find consensus. I actually thought that the statement by the representative of China underlined that very point.

Let me also salute the hard work of United Nations Special Envoys and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, who are on the front lines of complex negotiations in situations such as Libya and Yemen. Again, I find myself agreeing with Ban Ki-moon on the importance of standing behind our mediator when the going gets tough. In our recent press statement on Yemen, the Security Council, among

other points, reiterated its unequivocal support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We need to stand behind the people we send out there, even when things are difficult.

I also want to salute, as my French and Chinese colleagues have done, the role that regional and subregional organizations play. They are well placed to assume mediation roles, as the African Union (AU) did during the peace talks in the Central African Republic, for example. Let me take this opportunity also to express our strong support for ongoing AU-led mediation efforts to resolve the current crisis in the Sudan and its people's calls for a civilian-led transitional authority. It was good that the Security Council issued a press statement last night standing behind African Union efforts condemning violence and calling for talks to resolve the situation.

It is therefore critical that the United Nations retains an agile mediation capacity. The mediation standby team of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) is an important part of this prevention toolkit, with a wide range of preventive diplomacy capacities and expertise, including on the design and management of dialogue processes, constitution-making, gender and inclusion issues, natural resources, power-sharing and security arrangements. The United Kingdom has been one of the largest donors to the DPPA multi-year appeal to support those activities.

The United Kingdom believes strongly, however, that further progress is essential on the matter of women's participation. Women continue to build peace when formal processes fail. They lobby for peace processes to begin when parties refuse to talk and implement peace agreements long after the international donors have walked away. For that and other reasons, the United Kingdom in 2018 committed \$1.6 million to increasing women's participation in peace processes. The Secretary-General talked about FemWise-Africa, and I would also like to highlight the development of the Commonwealth Women Mediators Network, which I believe will play an increasingly important role in the coming years. More broadly, peace processes including and involving women fully are more likely to be inclusive of all groups and of the grass roots, making it more likely, in turn, that they will succeed. It is indeed about achieving success.

The Kuwaiti presidency's concept note for today's meeting (S/2019/456, annex) states that the Council's

“reactive” approach to crises means that action is often taken only once political and security situations have already deteriorated. Regrettably, it is difficult to disagree with that assessment, but I am grateful that we have an opportunity today to pause and consider. Let me give an example of a country-level issue and a thematic issue where I think we could be thinking about these questions.

At the country level, the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the north-west and south-west regions of Cameroon is an example of a developing crisis that has implications for fragile regional stability and wider international peace and security. But where there may be scope to prevent further deterioration through quick action by the United Nations and regional and subregional bodies — including, in particular, the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States — and to encourage and support efforts to establish a credible political dialogue, the United Kingdom is open to working together with all parties and organizations to try and find solutions.

On the thematic issue, I would also note Mary Robinson's words on the behalf of The Elders on climate change. I agree very much that this is an increasingly concerning driver of instability. That is why the United Kingdom called the first Security Council debate on the impact of climate change on peace and security in 2007 (see S/PV.5663). It is also why we offered the groundbreaking resolution 2349 (2017) on the Lake Chad Basin issue and its root causes, which include climate change. Let me take the opportunity to inform colleagues that the United Kingdom has today announced that we will reduce our emissions to net zero by 2050 and will enshrine that commitment in our law.

When the Security Council embraced the concept of sustaining peace in resolution 2282 (2016), it recognized the shared responsibility of all three pillars of the United Nations to act to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict.

As members of the Security Council, we too have a shared responsibility to act, to come together on the basis of these commitments and to continue to strengthen our approaches, with the support of others — the rest of the United Nations system — in the area of conflict prevention and mediation. Mary Robinson shared some wise quotes from Kofi Annan. Let me end with his words: “We need to keep hope alive and strive to do better.”

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the presence of the Secretary-General, who expressed interesting ideas on approaches to conflict prevention and mediation. We also welcome the briefing by Mrs. Mary Robinson, on behalf of The Elders, and we extend to her our deep respect for her commitment to helping to resolve conflicts and promote equality in societies. We welcome the presence of Mr. Ban Ki-moon and Mr. Santos Calderón, former President of the brotherly country of Colombia.

Multilateralism has been coming under heavy attack with the intention of questioning its efficiency and necessity. The sustainability of multilateral forums will depend on what we do today to preserve them. In that regard, the Dominican Republic reaffirms its commitment and confidence in multilateral organizations as key settings for the maintenance of international peace and security, with conflict prevention and mediation mechanisms as cornerstones for success.

Conflict prevention is a fundamental goal for the development of peoples. Through prevention, we preserve human dignity, ensure stable and sustainable societies and build peace. In addition, prevention costs much less than containing or managing conflicts.

Based on the above, prevention would seem to be the best solution to conflict. However, that is not the reality. Despite prevention efforts, currently all regions seem to be on the verge of conflict, threatening international peace and security. That leads us to ask ourselves how in the Council we can be more efficient in conflict prevention and mediation.

The importance of the role of the United Nations in conflict prevention is unquestionable. Since its founding, its objective and purpose have been to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, as set out in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations. That same Charter extends that preventive role to the Security Council, an organ entrusted to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes.

As States members of the Council, we must therefore fulfil our responsibility to work to innovate and continue to develop effective mechanisms for conflict prevention and mediation. That requires of us unity and fraternity and that our positions have a single goal: human dignity.

In order to fulfil the aforementioned mandate of the Charter of the United Nations, we as Member States are called on to focus more on preventing than on containing or managing conflict. For the former, the United Nations has tools such as special envoys, political and peacekeeping missions, regional offices, mediation experts, country teams, electoral assistance and sanctions monitoring groups.

The Dominican Republic believes that it is relevant for the Council to ensure and strengthen relations with such actors through the Secretary-General. Early warning by actors on the ground is essential for the deployment of specific and appropriate prevention and mediation tools. We must study successful mediation processes and replicate them, such as the case of Burkina Faso in 2014 and Colombia and its recent peace process, among others. We must strengthen preventive diplomacy, create resilience programmes for local communities, cooperate in strengthening the capacities of local authorities and support the development of public social policies to leverage existing tools and enhance them through better application and innovation.

Another challenge on which we must work is the involvement of women and young people in mediation and conflict prevention. In that regard, we congratulate the work being done by a cluster of networks of women mediators, such as the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation and the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network. We believe that our region could learn from them and look at the possibility of establishing a network of women mediators in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Finally, we reiterate the need to create networks of young mediators. It is essential that the Security Council's mediation tools ensure the inclusion of young people in order to achieve lasting peace agreements and build more just, inclusive and peaceful societies, taking up their role as mediators within local communities and as a point of contact with the international community.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): I would like to begin by thanking you, Sir, and Kuwait for convening this important meeting.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and The Elders, Ms. Mary Robinson and Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, whom I welcome back to the Chamber. Their valuable and insightful briefings have always been food for thought and given more momentum in discussing this issue.

In the rise of conflicts in recent years, with an unprecedented increase in fatalities and displacement of innocents, the global citizenry is looking keenly to the United Nations to perform its Charter responsibility effectively. Unquestionably, conflict prevention and mediation must take a higher precedence, as has been noted by many in the Chamber today. The focus of the United Nations should be clear in this regard; it must help and assist national and regional-led efforts to prevent and mediate conflict. Let me highlight several pertinent points, as follows.

First, dialogue, mediation and prevention must be high on our agenda. Indonesia strongly supports the call of the Secretary-General for a surge in political diplomacy in conflict prevention, which should be translated into concrete action. Although there have been some successes, there have been more cases of emerging conflict, to which the Secretary-General alluded earlier. The Security Council cannot just ensure that the process for peacemaking technically continues, on the one hand, while on the other it is impeded by the narrow national interests of some members. Preventive action will not success without political will and, I should like to underline, a solid moral compass. The unity of the Council is as essential as is the need for a sincere, well-owned and resolute effort by the parties to conflict to resolve their disputes peacefully. The Elders have reminded us all once again this morning of the need for the Council to be united, and we should heed their call.

My second point concerns the importance of stronger partnership with regional and subregional organizations in fostering global peace. Indonesia, together with the rest of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) family, have worked to implement the ASEAN Charter, with its fundamental reliance on peaceful dispute settlement through dialogue and consultation. We realize that prevention and sustaining peace must happen as a joint, principled and well-owned partnership. Regional entities, with their unique bonds of history and knowledge, can have unmatched insights into workable mediation approaches and prevention. Indonesia strongly believes that neighbours know best. The Security Council can utilize the advantages of regional entities by engaging with them from the earliest signs of potential conflicts and deepening its relations with them, as it has done with the African Union and other regional

organizations. During our presidency, we also engaged with the European Union in addressing many issues.

Thirdly, the root causes of conflict must be addressed meaningfully. In doing so, the Security Council must fully uphold the principles of international law, human rights and humanitarian law. But we also need to be cognizant of the fact that conflict does not happen without causes, be they issues related to tribal ethnicity, poverty, competing resources or as a result of pressures from climate change, such as desertification, among others. Indonesia is encouraged that the Security Council, along with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, is increasingly focused on comprehensively tackling conflict factors. We believe that United Nations entities should further support, in particular, those Member States lacking the capacity to integrate preventive measures to conflicts into their national governance and development functions. We need to ensure the provision of development aid so that conflicts can be avoided.

Fourthly, adequate resources are needed. Prevention and mediation should be reinforced and underpinned through a significant increase of and more reliable support, among other things, through the regular budget. In that respect, Indonesia also acknowledges the importance of voluntary financial support, including through the indispensable Peacebuilding Fund, for its conflict prevention and related projects.

Fifthly, it is important to welcome new initiatives to enhance training and capacity-building to improve and build the capacity of negotiators and mediators, including women as agents of peace and mediators. Every stakeholder that can contribute to peace should be given a role. Inclusivity is the key word. It was in relation not only to peacekeeping but also to peacebuilding and prevention that Ms. Retno Marsudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, hosted a regional meeting on women and peace and security in April with the intention of creating a global coalition of women for peace and tolerance that would consist of female peacekeepers, women negotiators and mediators. It is high time, as others have also said in this forum, that women are more visible at the forefront in carrying the banner of peace. It should also be incorporated into strategies or programmes related to peace maintenance and special political missions.

Indonesia, from its own experience, knows well that prevention and mediation can be extremely delicate. They have to be conducted diligently, intensively and, in some cases, confidentially. What matters are the positive and sustainable outcomes for peace. Indonesia commends the Secretary-General for his personal commitment and work on peace and mediation, as well as his Special Envoys, peace emissaries and the Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers for their vital work, along with the Secretariat, in continuing to strengthen the Mediation Support Unit.

We are also appreciative of the work of the Secretary-General's High-level Advisory Board on Mediation, on which Indonesia is also represented. Indonesia, together with Finland, as members of the Group of Friends of Mediation, were pleased to co-host a second meeting of the High-level Advisory Board on Mediation in Helsinki in June last year.

In conclusion, I have heard many speakers quote Articles of the Charter of the United Nations. I looked at the Charter as I heard the quotations. I would like to add another Article that we tend to forget, which is Article 24, concerning the functions and powers of the Security Council.

“In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security”.

I would like to underline, italicize, put in bold and highlight in bright colours the words “prompt and effective action”. We tend to forget those very important words. It is high time for us all here to be prompt and effective. It is high time for us to be bold in preventing conflict because conflict will not wait for us.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): Let me also thank Her Excellency Ms. Mary Robinson and His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon for their briefings.

Germany very much welcomes the Secretary-General's vision and priorities, which strongly focus on conflict prevention and resolution. We highly appreciate the work of the United Nations good offices, notably through the Special Envoys and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. We need to support them in their often very challenging work. At the same time, we highly appreciate all the other ways in which the United Nations contributes to mediation efforts through special political missions and mediation

support, which often remains invisible but is highly important for conflict resolution and prevention.

Mediation is a key instrument for advancing the peaceful resolution of conflicts. It can help bridge the societal and ideological divisions between conflicting parties because it covers the entire spectrum, from conflict prevention and supporting ceasefire negotiations to implementing agreements and the political reform processes arising from them. We are convinced that we need to think of prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding as a continuum.

Mediation processes can serve as a starting point for additional support efforts, for example in cases of pending comprehensive transformation processes, such as demilitarization, promotion of the rule of law and security sector or constitutional reform. In such situations, mediating in conflict means creating entry points for further engagement. In all such efforts, human rights also play a very crucial role in mediation processes, as well as in conflict prevention. That helps to identify grievances that, if left unaddressed, can lead to conflict. Human rights standards should not be used negatively only for naming and shaming, but should be used positively to provide a framework to devise sustainable solutions to address those grievances. Human rights can thus make mediation processes better geared towards conflict prevention.

The Security Council can play a powerful role in preventing conflict and in mediation processes and should make use of it with regard to its mandate of maintaining peace and security. Our Indonesian colleague just reminded us of that core task of the Council. We also feel that the Council should, more often, not only identify early warning but go from early warning to early action. That would be very important. The Council's work would be alleviated, much more efficient and much better geared towards fulfilling its mandate according to the Charter of the United Nations if it were not merely reactive. For example, when it comes to mediation, the transitions from peacekeeping to peacebuilding often occur in environments of political transformation of the peace process.

Mediation on different tracks needs to be included when transforming the United Nations presence in a country in order to align international support to expectations and deal-making on the ground. We believe that the United Nations, and in particular its Mediation Support Unit, should remain a strong actor

in mediation. That is also why we — Germany — are one of the main donors to the Mediation Support Unit, with a contribution of €3 million in 2018.

The same applies to conflict prevention. Conflict prevention remains a key priority for our membership of the Security Council. It is a topic in which we have invested politically and financially. We are the largest donor to the Joint United Nations Development Programme-United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention and have also invested considerable resources into our own Foreign Office, with a dedicated early warning unit.

At the same time, I would like to underline that the Council should use the entire toolbox at its disposal when it comes to conflict prevention. Very often, we focus on the use of the military in peacekeeping operations. We feel that we should invest more time and energy into considering the use of police in peace operations. Police work is often the best way to achieve prevention. In many operations, police can be used much more significantly, and we should always consider the use of preventive police work wherever it makes sense.

Now, many colleagues have already alluded to the issue of inclusion, which I would also like to underline. When it comes to mediation and conflict prevention, what we always need is an inclusive process. Peace processes cannot be sustainable when they involve only those in power or those who hold guns. They obviously need to involve a broad range of parties, elites and local actors, including women and youth. Experience has shown that the most successful peace processes are supported by the population and benefit from the buy-in of all concerned groups. Women mediators are an especially important part of successful and sustainable mediation efforts. Germany is an active supporter of the women and peace and security agenda, including during our time as an elected member of the Council.

Before I conclude, let me say a few words on what we are doing nationally to promote conflict prevention and mediation. Our approach to peace mediation adheres to the United Nations guiding principles for mediation, and we will continue working closely with other United Nations Member States to increase the role of mediation as an instrument to prevent conflict and sustain peace. In two days, on 14 June, the Federal Foreign Office will launch its own peace mediation framework in Berlin and discuss it with cooperation partners.

Germany not only mediates directly, as in the case of Ukraine, but also supports more than 30 peace processes by sending mediation experts and assists in dialogue processes on the regional and local levels. Independent and third-party actors are close and important cooperation partners in those endeavours. We also work in close cooperation with local communities, both on the settlement of disputes and climate protection issues.

Many speakers before me have alluded to the important nexus between climate change and security. As climate change is often a driver of instability, we therefore feel that we have to look more closely into that issue, including when it comes to conflict prevention and mediation. The nexus among climate issues, sustainable development, security and peace promotion is, from our point of view, very relevant. It often goes hand in hand and needs to be addressed as an interdependent factor in mediation and conflict prevention.

In conclusion, let me say that Germany is also a proud member of the Group of Friends of Mediation, chaired by Turkey and Finland, and I would like to thank the Chairs and all the members of the Group for their work. We believe that the Group has contributed to the professionalization of mediation support.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): It is good to see you, Sir, once again presiding over this meeting. We thank the delegation of Kuwait for convening the debate on this very important matter. We also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. It is such a great pleasure to see former President Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders, as well as Mr. Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General and Deputy Chair of The Elders, and we thank them for their valuable briefings and input.

Immediately after being sworn in as the first President of a democratic South Africa in 1994, Nelson Mandela said,

“[N]ever, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another”.

With those words, he embarked on the long and protected negotiations on a new, inclusive, transparent, all-party, multi-racial South Africa that would be non-racial, non-sexist, multi-religious and multicultural. The democratic South Africa was born after three and a half centuries of racial conflict in South Africa. Those historic developments enabled

a democratic South Africa to begin making a modest contribution to conflict mediation around the world, including in Syria, Palestine, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, Libya, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Burundi and Madagascar. The list goes on.

The promotion of the peaceful resolution of conflicts is a cornerstone of South Africa's foreign policy. That is borne out of our historical experience in successfully and peacefully transitioning from a colonial past to a constitutional democracy based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. It is through that spirit and commitment that we seek peaceful resolution and mediation for challenges and crises in the Sudan, South Sudan, Venezuela, the Central African Republic and many conflicts around the world. Mediation brings about reconciliation, less destruction, fewer killings and less displacement. We believe that United Nations peacekeeping should not be a means to an end, but instead complement those essential tools of peacemaking.

Resolving disputes peacefully and through mediation, ceasefire monitoring and assisting in the implementation of peace accords should be the hallmark of the United Nations approach to resolving conflicts worldwide. It is important to remind ourselves that the prevention of conflict remains the primary responsibility of States. Actions undertaken within the framework of conflict prevention by the United Nations should support and complement the conflict-prevention roles of national Governments and regions.

In that regard, the Council should strengthen its own instruments for the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. Before considering the use of force under Chapter VII, we must consider a peaceful political solution to conflict, as envisaged in Chapter VI. Article 33 of the Charter specifically states that parties to a dispute shall "first of all" seek a solution through political means, including negotiation and mediation. The settlement of disputes through those means has the added advantage of assisting parties to a conflict to recognize and address the root causes of conflict and embark on negotiations, thereby fostering a spirit of trust and cooperation.

South Africa believes that cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations could play an important role in conflict prevention. In that regard, the African

Union and the United Nations undertook to enhance collaboration, cooperation and coordination in the search for sustainable solutions to ongoing and future conflicts and to respond early, coherently and decisively to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts.

In that regard, South Africa calls for enhanced strategic and operational coordination of conflict prevention, resolution and mediation efforts by the United Nations, the African Union (AU), subregional organizations and other international and local actors, in the case of many conflicts. Such efforts should be aimed at strengthening the efficacy of conflict prevention and resolution efforts and supporting African-led peace and security solutions based on subsidiarity and comparative advantage.

For its part, the African Union Commission operationalized the AU Mediation Support Unit in mid-March. The AU Commission has devoted efforts towards strengthening the Mediation Support Unit, including through capacity-building on mediation and mainstreaming gender in mediation. In addition, the AU Commission is also spearheading efforts to institutionalize a mediation doctrine in the Commission, while the process of validating and adopting an advanced mediation training module for the AU is under way.

The recent operationalization of the AU Peace Fund will further boost AU capacities and efforts in mediation and conflict prevention in Africa. The Peace Fund is structured around three thematic windows: first, mediation; secondly, preventive diplomacy through institutional capacity; and thirdly, peace support operations. In this regard, the AU member States should be commended by the Council for their efforts to contribute to the Peace Fund, the endowment of which currently stands at \$115 million.

The role of women and youth in peacebuilding and mediation cannot be emphasized enough. It is common knowledge that, when women are involved in peace processes, such processes are more sustainable and effective. We welcome the role already being played by the FemWise-Africa network in various conflicts across the continent. In particular, we believe that the Security Council should commit to providing greater support for the development of female mediators, specifically women from countries and regions affected by conflict. Without the adequate representation of women in these efforts, the credibility of these processes is undermined.

We are confident that the greater representation of women in mediation efforts will correspond to the greater success of our efforts.

We believe that a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated approach to conflict prevention should also address the root causes of conflicts and strengthen political processes and respect for the rule of law, as well as the promotion of sustainable and inclusive development. Again, I turn to the wise words of our former President, Mr. Nelson Mandela: “All conflicts, no matter how intractable, are capable of peaceful resolution.”

South Africa supports the promotion of peaceful solutions to conflict through mediation, peacemaking, peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of this meeting and appreciate the briefings delivered by such distinguished speakers as Secretary-General António Guterres; Chair of The Elders, Ms. Mary Robinson; and former Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon. We also welcome the former President of our sister Republic of Colombia, Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, to the Council.

We commend the special contribution made by The Elders to the current global scene as an authoritative voice of moderation and wisdom in the field of international relations, as well as a permanent source of innovative ideas and firm defenders of multilateralism and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. This morning, its senior representatives recalled the central importance of the primary purpose enshrined in that text, which is the maintenance of international peace and security and the commitment we have undertaken to adopting collective measures to prevent and eliminate these threats to peace. Likewise, it is essential to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes or situations that have the potential to lead to conflict.

Nearly 75 years after the signing of the Charter, the challenges and threats to peace and security are perhaps more complex, but its purposes and principles remain valid and unchanged. It is our responsibility to work in a univocal manner to ensure that the Security Council plays an active role, promoting and recommending a more systemic approach to preventive diplomacy based on timely risk analysis, early warning and management plans, which the Secretary-General and various agencies of the system should be able to provide.

With this vision in mind, I would like to share the following key ideas that my country supports with regard to preventive diplomacy in its current context.

First, we highlight the role played by the United Nations regional political offices as sources of early warning in territories that are often not included on the Council's agenda. Their preventive potential is enormous, but we regret receiving the valuable information they produce only once every six months. We believe it essential to develop more expeditious and flexible mechanisms in order to receive this information when the urgency of a situation warrants. Their actions must also be strengthened with greater capacities for analysis and evaluation of the situation on the ground.

In this regard, the elected members of the Council have been promoting the holding of periodic informal meetings with the Secretariat in order to learn, from a regional perspective and on a rotational basis, about potential threats to peace and security. We should also strengthen synergies with regional and subregional organizations, particularly in order to learn about any relevant communication or decisions in the face of possible threats in these areas. This will allow us to explore possible routes for joint cooperation. It will also be important to generate synergies with organizations fostering development on the ground, which can offer important complementary information.

We believe that it would be beneficial to make use of the various meeting formats available to the Council in a preventive context, such as the Arria Formula and informal interactive dialogues. We also believe that recourse to the means of peaceful settlement of disputes, referred to in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, is an underutilized tool that has a genuine capacity to offer positive alternatives for action before, during and after conflicts. These include mediation, which corresponds to a mandate from the parties and requires their consent at all times, respects their possible sensitivities and is based on applicable international law.

In this connection, like other speakers, we strongly support the efforts of the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General who, by engaging in mediation or seeking to develop these capacities at the local level, assume the special responsibility of guiding the parties to a dispute or potential dispute, as a visible element of an international rules-based system. Likewise, we welcome the timely decision of the Secretary-General to

establish a High-level Advisory Board on Mediation. We believe that this opportunity should be taken advantage of more frequently, both by the Council as well as by regional and subregional organizations recommended by the Organization's regional political offices.

Finally, there is no better preventive activity than the creation of more open and inclusive societies that promote sustainable development and count on the active, positive and innovative participation of new actors such as women and youth.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation thanks the delegation of Kuwait for having convened this meeting of vital importance. We thank His Excellency Mr. António Guterres for his extensive and exhaustive briefing. We also thank Her Excellency Ms. Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders, and His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon for their wise and enlightening statements.

As indicated in Chapter I of the Charter of the United Nations, the purpose of our Organization is to maintain international peace and security through the prevention and resolution of conflicts. We believe multilateralism to be one of the main factors involved in achieving our conflict prevention objectives. Multilateralism is the highest expression, at the governmental level, of the quest for a world of peace, prosperity, justice and human rights — the founding pillars of the United Nations itself. Multilateralism makes it possible to resolve issues and conflicts in a formal partnership between States and parties to disputes, and it is necessary in that regard to support and promote the Secretary-General's work for preventive diplomacy. We welcome the Secretary-General's vision for focusing the Organization's efforts in the peace and security arena on prevention and the expansion of diplomacy for peace, which affirms the founding mission of the United Nations with the aim of replacing a culture of reaction with one of prevention. We encourage all Member States to adhere to that doctrine and to accept the good offices of the Secretary-General as crucial elements for preventing and mediating conflicts.

Based on Chapter VI of the Charter, the Security Council has all the tools necessary for the impartial mediation of any dispute that puts our main goals or others of a similar nature at risk. We therefore urge States to use the resources available to them appropriately, prioritizing principles such as respect for the sovereignty of all States and non-interference in

internal affairs, as well as other principles of conflict mediation founded on international law. Extensive, close cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations is essential and demands that we join forces to expand partnerships with a view to doing more effective, efficient and transparent work.

In conclusion, Equatorial Guinea would like to emphasize the importance of increasing the participation of women and expanding their numbers in conflict prevention and mediation missions. Their involvement in mediation processes would help us to better understand the causes of conflicts as well as alternative solutions to them. We reiterate our thanks to all the countries that contribute troops and police to those missions, as their efforts and sacrifices make the daily struggle to maintain international peace and security possible.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): At the outset, I would like to thank our eminent briefers for their valuable contribution to today's discussion.

The establishment of relations with the parties to a conflict is an essential condition for successful mediation. To gain their trust and confidence, relationships must be genuine, and partners must feel that their interests are truly understood. It is hard to imagine a more reliable and trustworthy group of people than the Elders, represented today by Ms. Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland, and Mr. Ban Ki-moon, our former Secretary-General. It is indeed an unusual organization, but thanks to its uniqueness, the members of the Elders may possess a unique opportunity to have access to decision-makers at the highest levels, creating a safe space for amplified dialogue. They bring words of wisdom. Our job is to keep an open mind and not shy away from action.

Conflict prevention and crisis management through mediation are founding principles of the United Nations, and we cannot overemphasize their significance to our work in the Council. We should do everything possible to further enhance the capacity of our Organization. The changing nature of conflicts and increasing tensions in our societies demand that we renew our efforts to make progress in the area of mediation and conflict prevention. We should collectively be ready to do more and to act earlier. That means we have to take a further step by matching early warning with early action. The Security Council should be a powerful driving force in

advocating for mediation and prevention efforts at an early stage.

If we are to achieve sustainable agreements it is vital to involve all parts of society, from relevant local actors up to top-level officials. It is also invaluable to include women and youth from the very early stages in order to accomplish real change on the ground and give ownership of the process to those who will eventually implement it. The entire population has to be involved.

Something that we have underlined many times during our tenure on the Council and will again today is that the United Nations cannot always be expected to fulfil its role alone. We live in a world of multifaceted challenges to peace and stability that involve countless numbers of different actors and dynamics. Regional organizations, individual Member States and non-governmental entities have important, at times exceedingly important, contributions to make, depending on the specific features of the conflicts in question.

We are not alone in thinking that the United Nations should further strengthen partnerships to ensure greater coordination and consistency in the mediation activities of various actors. With no rigid rules, mediation can be used flexibly and adjusted to a particular conflict. It is crucial to ensure that negotiators and mediators consult civil society, including women's groups, on the design, implementation, and monitoring of any peace agreement, and that they guarantee the protection of women leaders at risk of targeted political violence. Initiatives led by women have frequently helped to prevent and mitigate the escalation of violence through their engagement in constructive dialogue and advocacy for peace.

The United Nations already has the right tools for advancing mediation. The Mediation Support Unit, the Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers and the High-level Advisory Board on Mediation all provide exceptional assistance to countries in need. Due to the delicate and confidential nature of their job, we often cannot recognize their work or acknowledge their merits. I therefore want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those responsible for mediation and prevention efforts in our system and beyond. I would particularly like to thank the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to promote mediation as the most cost-effective and underrated method of conflict resolution. It is not without reason that Chapter VI of the Charter

lists negotiation and mediation as important tools that play a vital role in promoting peace.

In conclusion, I would like to call the Council's attention to the still unfulfilled calls for establishing a system to improve the financing of mediation and prevention efforts. Poland supports those efforts with donations to the Multi-Year Appeal of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and we encourage others to do the same.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation commends the presidency of Kuwait for holding today's briefing on the topic of mediation as a tool for conflict prevention. I am also pleased to welcome to the Chamber Ms. Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as Mr. Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General. I would like to thank them for their significant contributions to our discussion and to ask them to come back and visit us here often. We need their wisdom and perspective. I would also like to welcome the presence of President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, who honoured the Council by participating in our meeting this morning.

The ever-increasing human and material costs of the multiplicity and complexity of armed conflicts around the world demand that the international community move from an approach based on managing conflicts to one firmly focused on prevention, with mediation as a priority tool. The Secretary-General's clear intention to place mediation at the core of United Nations action is reflected in his report of 27 June 2017 (A/72/115) on the peaceful settlement of disputes. The pacific settlement of disputes therefore remains a priority for the United Nations and in particular for the Security Council. It is enshrined in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, which provides for a range of means that include negotiation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration. It is in that context that the Secretary-General is pursuing his tireless efforts, mediated in theatres of conflict by his Special Envoys and Representatives, often in difficult conditions.

The High-level Advisory Board on Mediation was established along the same lines, as it reinforces the effectiveness of existing mechanisms. However, in order to achieve maximum efficiency, those mechanisms require a strong political commitment at both the national and regional levels. In other words, ownership by States and regional organizations of those

tools is essential. Civil society, especially women, young people, and traditional local leaders must also participate fully in mediation efforts.

Under the Charter, conflict prevention through mediation is a primary duty of States, which are responsible for taking every possible measure to create the sociopolitical conditions essential to maintaining peace. In the light of that, since the end of our post-electoral crisis the Government of Côte d'Ivoire has been working to implement a national strategy for peacebuilding, based on national reconciliation and strengthening social cohesion through our Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a Ministry dedicated to social cohesion and victims of war. In line with that vision, in 2017 we also created a national coordination centre for our early-warning and response mechanism, which enables us to identify the causes of conflicts and to formulate responses aimed at preventing or containing violence.

National conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies must be expanded through the activities of the regional economic communities, which, under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, can contribute effectively to conflict prevention with the valuable support of the United Nations. For example, thanks to its special mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution, and in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has often successfully managed crises at the subregional level. I am pleased to be able to point to ECOWAS's resolute call for a return to constitutional order in Mali following the coup d'état in 2012 and its successful mediation of the post-electoral crisis in the Gambia. Furthermore, and in a subregional context marked by community violence and transnational organized crime, the establishment of early-warning mechanisms by regional and subregional organizations, such as the ECOWAS Warning and Response Network system, could help prevent emerging crises, thereby avoiding what are sometimes long and difficult negotiations.

Côte d'Ivoire is of the view that regional and subregional strategies would be more effective if they had greater support from the United Nations, in accordance with the relevant provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter. My country therefore welcomed the signing on 19 April 2017 of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. We commend the

remarkable progress made in the implementation of the Partnership, including through cooperation between the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission, as well as through regular consultations between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire would like to reiterate its belief that mediation remains an effective tool and can be used at every stage of conflict resolution, including to prevent conflicts and address their root causes. However, that effectiveness can be achieved only if it has the advantage of support from the Council as it is currently configured and if it is used in good faith in order to ensure the effective maintenance of international peace. We must therefore join our efforts to make mediation a central element of the United Nations system for the maintenance of peace and security.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome you, Sir, as President of the Security Council and thank you for organizing today's meeting. Mediating and preventing the conflicts that threaten international peace and security is indeed one of the most pressing tasks of the United Nations and of global politics as a whole. We are grateful to Secretary-General António Guterres and to the Chair and Deputy Chair of The Elders, Ms. Mary Robinson and Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for their statements.

There can be no doubt about the importance of strengthening the capacity of the United Nations for preventing conflicts. The Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the States Members of the United Nations provide all the necessary tools in that regard. They reside first and foremost in Chapters I and VI of the Charter and in the resolutions of Member States, particularly resolution 2171 (2014), which enshrines the fundamental principles of international assistance in this area.

In the past few years the Secretariat, the Security Council and some regional and subregional organizations have made considerable efforts to analyse the causes of crises and ways to prevent them. Despite that, there is no universal or exhaustive list of conflict indicators. That is not surprising, because the Council's practical experience has shown that every situation has its own unique set of factors influencing its development, which means that there is no universal formula for solving problems. Each situation requires a delicate, balanced and impartial approach and a patient

search for a solution, and that is why one-size-fits-all solutions are not useful in this area.

We firmly believe that international assistance can be provided only with the consent of the parties to the dispute. It must be impartial and free of preconditions. Double standards and veiled political games designed to overthrow legitimate authorities are also unacceptable. Unfortunately, such situations are not uncommon today, which understandably compels States to be suspicious about mediation. We need only cite the examples of Iraq, Libya and Syria. The international community is still dealing with the consequences of the crises in those countries, the result of shameless foreign invasions.

But some learn nothing from history. Today the same approach is being applied to Venezuela, where the acute phase of the crisis began as a result of external pressure through sanctions and direct foreign interference. Not surprisingly, the most successful mediation efforts there are being conducted by States that have been smart enough not to take sides in Venezuela's internal confrontation.

Success in crisis prevention and resolution can be achieved only through a painstaking collective quest for political and diplomatic solutions, based on a direct, inclusive dialogue between the parties involved. As the most authoritative and representative organization in the world, the United Nations is perfectly situated to play a central role in international mediation efforts. The good-offices missions of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoys and Representatives continue to prove that they are needed. However, we believe it is important to ensure that United Nations mediators are chosen based on objective criteria and with respect for regional balance.

It is also important to take advantage of the potential of regional and subregional organizations, in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter. Regional mediators' thorough knowledge of the nuances of local conflicts enables a more accurate understanding of a situation and therefore makes it possible to put forward objective, realistic proposals for bringing the parties' positions closer together. We are particularly pleased about the fact that African countries are actively taking the initiative to address the continent's problems. That is something that the leadership of the African Union (AU) should truly be proud of. In that context, I want to single out the AU's efforts with regard to the Central

African Republic and South Sudan, although there is still much work to be done, needless to say.

We value the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, which is founded on the principles of neutrality, objectivity and cooperation with the Governments of the States of Central Asia and focused on cooperation with regional integration organizations such as the Eurasian Economic Community, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. We see excellent possibilities for developing partnerships between the United Nations and these organizations, which are expanding their political authority and their contribution to strengthening regional and international security.

While we too are ready to work together with others to develop preventive diplomacy, we believe that prevention should not be seen as a panacea for all ills, and it cannot become a pretext for interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign States. Their consent to this kind of United Nations involvement is a key criterion for us.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that many of the world's problems today could be avoided if some of our colleagues on the Security Council genuinely made the interests of the States they say they want to help their top priority rather than lecturing them and inflicting sanctions and coercive unilateral economic measures on them. Such unilateral approaches, founded on blind faith in one's own exceptional status and righteousness and on an unwillingness to listen to the views of others, not only prevent the Security Council from reaching agreement on collective approaches but also undermine the authority of the United Nations. If we can deal with this kind of erroneous and short-sighted behaviour, our Organization's potential with regard to issues of conflict prevention and mediation would increase significantly.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's meeting. I also want to thank the representatives of The Elders, Ms. Mary Robinson and Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for their words of genuine wisdom, which should serve as an inspiration to us. Their words were also candid, and I believe they made us confront our individual and collective responsibility as members of the Security Council.

Belgium has made conflict prevention one of its priorities. It is one of the foundations of the inclusive approach to the sustainability of peace, to which we subscribe. As you point out in your concept note for today's debate (S/2019/456, annex), Mr. President, the underlying causes of conflict come under various areas — peace and security, development and human rights. It therefore makes sense that the Security Council should obtain information from all three of those pillars in order to assess possible threats to peace and security. It is not only human rights violations and restrictions on the political space, but also increasingly scarce natural resources, the degradation of the living space as a result of human activity, natural disasters and climate change that are all indicators of tensions that in the right circumstances can degenerate into conflict. The Council can and should use them as a basis for its analysis and action.

In that context, Belgium supports the continuation of early-warning exercises and especially information exchanges between the Council and the Secretariat, including information related to the development and human rights pillars. Early responses, including through mediation, following early warnings, are not necessarily the prerogative of the Security Council alone but can include, as appropriate, the good offices of the Secretary-General, his Special Envoys, representatives and resident coordinators. It can also take place outside the United Nations system, as we are currently seeing with Venezuela and Cameroon. But if need be the Council can send signals that help generate the political will to resolve a crisis and support these mediation efforts. However, that is possible only if the Council is duly alerted well in advance.

That brings me to my second point. The information that the Council receives is worth more if it can include a regional dimension. The United Nations regional offices offer added value both for identifying risk factors and monitoring progress. We believe that more dynamic and probably more frequent informational meetings with the heads of those regional offices would be correspondingly more valuable. For

example, we look forward to hearing the regional analysis of the Secretary-General's new Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa. The regional offices are also an ideal vehicle for supporting or collaborating with regional and subregional organizations. We believe these organizations have a leading role to play in conflict prevention and mediation, and we encourage them to further develop their capacities in that regard. Dialogue between countries in the same region and outside formal organizations can also have added value by possibly enabling convergence on measures to ease tensions, which would be very useful in the Middle East, for example. The United Nations could provide support for informal dialogues in this area as well.

Thirdly, I would like to emphasize the importance of the link between prevention and mediation, including at the local level, and peacekeeping operations. Belgium supports the Secretary-General in his desire to increase mediation expertise within missions and strengthen partnerships with local and national mediation actors. Mediation needs an integrated, tailored and well-coordinated approach. Engaging missions with communities, including local authorities, traditional or religious leaders and other relevant actors on the ground, helps to prevent local tensions from fuelling conflict and, more positively, helps to build peace through local reconciliation.

Although community engagement is of course the primary responsibility of the civilian and police components, it is important that it also be supported by missions' military components. We welcome the efforts made in that regard within the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, for example. National ownership of mediation and prevention processes increases their chances of success. That is particularly the case when women are involved as mediators, negotiators and witnesses in those processes.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.