



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

9574th meeting

Wednesday, 13 March 2024, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Yamazaki	(Japan)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria	Ms. Krikou
	China	Ms. Huang Xiaowei
	Ecuador	Ms. Tanca
	France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	Guyana	Ms. Persaud
	Malta	Ms. Gatt
	Mozambique	Mr. Afonso
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Hyunwoo Cho
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Sierra Leone	Ms. Alghali
	Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
	Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Promoting conflict prevention — empowering all actors including women and youth

Letter dated 1 March 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2024/210)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room AB-0928 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Promoting conflict prevention — empowering all actors including women and youth

Letter dated 1 March 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2024/210)

The President: I would like to warmly welcome the Ministers and other high-level representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czechia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Egypt, Fiji, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, El Salvador, Sri Lanka, Spain, South Africa, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; His Excellency Mr. Sérgio França Danese, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission; Mr. Abiodun Williams, Professor of the Practice of International Politics at Tufts University; and Ms. Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, Programme Manager of the Pacific Women Mediators Network and International Steering Group Gender Liaison for the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict.

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

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/2024/210, which contains the text of a letter dated 1 March 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: I would like to express my gratitude to Japan for hosting this important open debate.

The prevention of conflict — to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war — is the very purpose for which the United Nations was founded. We are witnessing an upsurge in armed conflict around the world, with the highest number of conflict-related deaths in three decades. Humanitarian needs continue to break new records and far outpace our ability to meet them. We need more prevention. Prevention saves lives and safeguards development gains. It is cost effective.

Prevention is a central priority in the Secretary-General's policy brief, A New Agenda for Peace, on three levels. First, there is the prevention of conflict at the international level to guard against the onset and escalation of violent conflict among countries. Secondly, there is a need for stronger global-regional partnerships, given the increasingly regionalized nature of conflict and the importance of regional actors. Thirdly, there is the prevention of conflict within countries to shore up development gains, protect advancements in human rights and help guard against the impacts of global shocks.

At the international level, the Charter of the United Nations provides a clear direction. Its first Article refers to the obligation to "take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace".

For nearly 80 years, the United Nations has given the world a home for dialogue. Chapter VI of the Charter enshrines the mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes — from the judicial dimension of prevention provided by the International Court

of Justice to arbitration, negotiation and mediation. Ultimately, at the international level, prevention is about the use of diplomacy for peace.

As the Secretary-General noted in *A New Agenda for Peace*, all sides must prioritize diplomacy in order to bridge the growing divides in the world and to ensure that unmitigated competition does not trample humanity. The good offices of the Secretary-General can play a critical role in that regard. In *A New Agenda for Peace*, the Secretary-General reiterated his commitment to deploying his good offices to help Member States manage deepening divisions in global politics.

Regional arrangements and organizations are crucial to prevention. They can bring credibility and legitimacy to diplomatic efforts, increase trust and provide mechanisms for crisis management. Regional actions have successfully prevented conflicts and escalation throughout recent history, as was the case with the Helsinki process in Europe, as well as the regional integration efforts in Africa and its subregions.

The United Nations Regional Offices for Central Africa and for West Africa and the Sahel and the Secretary-General's Special Envoys for the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes all work closely with their regional counterparts, helping to resolve issues that transcend borders, such as farmer-herder disputes.

Prevention begins at the national level. National actors have the ability to build the necessary mechanisms to manage disputes peacefully in their societies and to enact the structural reforms needed to address the underlying drivers of conflict. *A New Agenda for Peace* recognizes that prevention must be approached as a universal goal. Every single country, whether rich or poor, has an obligation to address the drivers of conflict in its own society and to make the necessary political and financial investments to that end. We have seen countries successfully invest in national infrastructure for peace. Such initiatives play a key role in building societies that are more inclusive and able to manage tensions peacefully.

International actors, in particular the United Nations, can play an important role in supporting those national efforts. Through the United Nations Development Programme-Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention, we provide such support to dozens of countries.

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is ideally placed to bring international actors together in support of national priorities, helping marshal resources and providing a platform for experience-sharing. We note with great appreciation the increasing engagement by Member States that have come to the Peacebuilding Commission to show how they are advancing peacebuilding goals in their societies.

For example, Timor-Leste has spoken at the PBC of its peacebuilding journey and reflected on efforts to address challenges such as economic development and women and youth empowerment. Canada, Colombia and Norway have shared their experiences in promoting indigenous voices in peace and reconciliation processes. Those cross-regional experiences demonstrate the universal nature of prevention.

A New Agenda for Peace places inclusion at the centre of prevention efforts. It focuses on how women's full, meaningful and effective participation is closely connected to our efforts to prevent conflict and build sustainable peace. Simply put, without half the population participating in decision-making, there cannot be sustainable peace.

But almost 25 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), women's full, equal and meaningful participation in building peace and preventing conflict remains the exception, not the rule. Women must be able to exercise their full rights — they must be able to generate their livelihoods and participate in the economy; have access to education, health and legal protections; and enjoy safety and security online and offline.

The women and peace and security agenda can be fully realized only through national action. More than 100 countries from all regions have developed national plans to implement resolution 1325 (2000). We commend them for their leadership and call on others to join them. It is essential that international support is made available for those efforts. For our part, we have supported women's advisory groups in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, for example, to enable women's voices to be heard in political and peace processes.

We must also prioritize inclusion and empowerment of youth. Young people are a great source of resilience, hope and innovation in every society. To empower youth, we have increasingly deployed new technologies to organize digital consultations with

youth constituencies. Those dialogues have helped us better understand their views and aspirations and better reflect them in our work.

Let me be clear — we have an obligation to chart a path through these uncertain times by prioritizing the prevention of conflict at all levels — global, regional and national.

The President: I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. França Danese.

Mr. França Danese: On behalf of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), I am grateful for the invitation to brief the Security Council.

The Commission commends Japan for organizing this open debate. Conflict prevention is a part of the comprehensive approach to sustaining peace that invites close cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council. We should never lose sight of the fact that prevention is part of the efforts to maintain international peace and security and to pursue our common goal of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, as expressed by the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations.

As our shared reflection on the importance of prevention has evolved, we have come to recognize the centrality of a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace. The twin resolutions of 2016 (resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262) and of 2020 (resolution 2558 (2020) and General Assembly resolution 75/201) are documentary proof of that understanding. In addressing many issues, including conflict prevention, the resolutions recognize the importance of addressing its root causes, promoting sustained and sustainable economic growth, eradicating poverty and building accountable institutions — all based on national ownership and the strictly voluntary adherence by States that seek the Commission's support. The PBC and the Security Council are essential parts in supporting Member States on their path to implementing that vision.

The Commission recognizes that conflict prevention, as part of sustaining peace, requires a cross-pillar approach and reaffirms that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. As the concept note (S/2024/210, annex) for this meeting rightly points out, resilience comes from the combination of stable and coherent social fabrics, supported by institutions

that uphold human dignity. To achieve that goal, a nationally owned and inclusive approach is crucial. Effective prevention should be inclusive and take into consideration perspectives of all segments of society, including women and youth.

In that regard, the Commission reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in peacebuilding, underscoring that their full, equal and meaningful participation is widely recognized as an important factor for achieving sustainable peace and social stability. As recognized by resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2282 (2016) of the Security Council and resolution 70/262 of the General Assembly, the participation of women in political processes and decision-making and their full involvement in prevention strategies should be increased. National prevention strategies, to be effective, should seek to incorporate the understanding that women's participation can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

The Commission has also recognized the role youth should play in successful prevention strategies. Conflict and social instability have a considerable impact on the opportunities young people will have in their lives, both in economic and political terms. Furthermore, the lack of opportunities and proper social protection for young people make those individuals more vulnerable and exposed to violence. Therefore, their social and economic protection, coupled with their inclusion in peacebuilding processes, are necessary steps to ensure that any strategy takes into account their needs and to ensure that their short- and long-term interests are represented. The PBC has consistently valued that inclusive approach and recognizes that the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015) by the Security Council has encouraged that body to incorporate that relevant angle in its considerations.

As an inherently political process aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, recurrence or continuation of conflict, peacebuilding encompasses a wide range of political, development and human rights programmes and mechanisms and must be inclusive. In that sense, the Commission, in its advisory role, stresses the importance of bringing that comprehensive approach to the Security Council. We recall that more than a responsibility to focus on managing conflicts, that body has also a responsibility to prevent them and to strive to promote building and sustaining peace. The PBC is committed to generating and bringing attention

to good practices and success stories in conflict prevention as a means to show that good political will, coupled with generous support and guidance by the international community, can work.

As we prepare for the Summit of the Future, in September, and for the peacebuilding architecture review, in 2025, the Commission hopes that the role of the Security Council in prevention will be strengthened. The Peacebuilding Commission is ready to continue to provide to Member States the political space to discuss their prevention strategies and to work as a bridge for the Security Council in its considerations on countries that are undergoing conflict or transitioning from conflict.

The President: I thank Mr. França Danese for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Williams.

Mr. Williams: Let me first express my profound appreciation to Japan for inviting me to brief the Security Council on conflict prevention.

Conflict prevention is an urgent imperative in our times. Conflicts devastate societies. Their costs can be counted in human suffering, economic collapse and the instability they provoke within and beyond the borders of countries.

Conflict prevention is not a field for the faint of heart. Yet, preventive action is possible and, when properly conceived, effective — a belief that originated during my service in the United Nations first preventive deployment mission, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force, in North Macedonia. The heart of the challenge before us is to apply the lessons provided by successful cases of prevention and to marshal the political will to act.

Prevention must be a strategic priority at all three stages of the conflict cycle: preventing its outbreak, preventing its continuation and preventing its recurrence. For effective conflict prevention, it is critical first to understand the causes of conflict, which are always context specific. There are no one-size-fits-all solutions.

Secondly, it is important to understand the conflict prevention toolbox. That includes interventions for long-term structural prevention and operational measures. Both types of interventions require a combination of

diplomatic and political tools, economic and social tools, legal and constitutional tools, and military and security tools.

Thirdly, prevention requires a commitment from Governments and intergovernmental organizations to provide the requisite resources. Peacemaking to prevent the continuation of conflict entails dedicating significant diplomatic resources. It also entails recognizing that peacemaking is a process, not a singular event such as the signing of a peace agreement.

Preventing recurrence requires understanding that conflict triggers in the post-war environment may be different from those that caused the initial conflict. For example, ethnic divisions may be stronger in the post-conflict stage. It is necessary to pursue multiple objectives simultaneously. Establishing physical security is important, as is addressing rule of law and justice issues and economic governance, which when carried out together, make the recurrence of conflict less likely.

Effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding are built on national and local ownership. Peacebuilding works when local people are involved and feel that it is their idea. The long-term legitimacy and viability of peacebuilding depend on sustained commitment by local leaders and communities.

The Security Council has an essential role to play in preventing disputes from opening the Pandora's box of armed conflict. Let me offer six ideas for enhancing the Council's prevention role.

First, the Council could make greater use of fact-finding missions at much earlier stages of a dispute, as set out in Article 34 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Secondly, it could encourage States, including neighbouring countries, to promptly bring the risk of conflict to the Council's attention.

Thirdly, the Council could give urgent attention to States suffering severe economic, environmental and security strains, because they are hosting large refugee populations.

Fourthly, the Council could organize a high-level discussion on conflict prevention during the Summit of the Future.

Fifthly, the Council could support the establishment of a group of friends of conflict prevention. That informal group of Member States would reflect the

growing consensus on the importance of conflict prevention at the United Nations.

And sixthly, the Council could adopt a resolution updating resolution 2171 (2014), reflecting what we have learned about conflict prevention during the past decade and highlighting the priorities for the future.

Preventing conflict and building peace requires a concerted, consistent effort by all concerned. When the lessons of experience are suitably applied, sustainable peace is within our grasp.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Bhagwan Rolls.

Ms. Bhagwan Rolls: I am grateful for the opportunity to brief the Security Council today, drawing on the work of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) network in the Pacific Islands region in advancing the inclusive and comprehensive prevention of all forms of violence.

We live in a time of growing global securitization and militarized responses to all types of crises, including armed conflict and climate change impacts. That trend redirects resources away from conflict prevention, damaging the gains achieved by local peacebuilders. In 2000, when women peacebuilders collectively advocated for the women and peace and security agenda at the Security Council, it was for a new gender-transformative approach to peace and security that requires making conflict prevention a priority on the Council's agenda. To end conflicts, the 2015 global study on resolution 1325 (2000) raised the urgency: first, to reduce military expenditures and control the availability of armaments in coherence with countries' commitments to human rights and gender equality; secondly, to promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and strengthen comprehensive early warning systems; and thirdly, to foster a culture of peace through peace education and inclusion, because the women and peace and security agenda is about ending conflict, not about making conflict safer for women.

The global study emphasized that as long as harmful gender norms, traditional gender relations and gender inequalities persist, conflicts, crises and violence will continue. Only transforming our approach from militarized security towards prioritizing human security with a gender lens can build lasting peace. The Security Council has a unique responsibility in advancing that

transformation, relying on the experiences at the local level. Practically, learning from local peacebuilders, including women and young women, through regular Arria Formula events and briefings, can provide the Council with concrete ideas for what peace operations, peacekeeping missions, integrated offices and United Nations country teams should do in practice.

Grounded in local communities, the work of the GPPAC Pacific operationalizes inclusive human security approaches through conflict- and gender-sensitive programming across the triple nexus. That enables us to collectively meet the human security priorities of diverse people who experience intersecting crises, disasters, the coronavirus disease pandemic and climate change, armed conflicts, intercommunal violence and political crises. Using traditional and local knowledge, peacebuilders develop locally appropriate strategies to prevent and address the resurgence of conflict. As first responders, we address threats comprehensively and inclusively, without differentiating between development, humanitarian or peace and security issues. Yet we continue to be constrained by short-term project funding for specific projects, while resources for prevention are increasingly drying up in favour of securitized approaches. We rely on volunteer work to build connections between diverse projects, but our common peace and security is not a project and cannot be achieved through traditional securitized approaches. Normatively, we also have an inclusive and comprehensive human security framework that can guide the Council's norm-setting towards human security.

Through the adoption of a dedicated peace and security pillar in the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent in addition to the Boe Declaration on Regional Security, Pacific leaders have affirmed the call from Pacific peacebuilders to embrace an expanded concept of security that includes human security, economic security, humanitarian assistance and environmental security to build resilience to disasters and climate change and that peacebuilding requires a partnership with non-governmental organizations to enhance collective capacity, including for prevention. The revitalized Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration of 2023 reflects women peacebuilders' call for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda by ensuring the full, equal, effective and meaningful leadership and participation of women

and girls in all their diversity at every stage of peace processes, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding for peace and security.

In the follow-up General Assembly resolution to the report of the Secretary-General entitled *Our Common Agenda* (General Assembly resolution 76/6), Member States pledged to strengthen global governance for the sake of present and future generations. This highlights the urgency for the Security Council to strengthen its role in the global prevention ecosystem. Drawing lessons from GPPAC Pacific and GPPAC's global network of local peacebuilders, we offer the following suggestions.

First, prevention requires both a short-term and long-term approach. Short-term approaches include the Security Council's leadership in sharpening norms and practices for the full, equal and meaningful participation of all actors in all aspects of peace and security, as well as encouraging the development of national prevention strategies and effective early warning and early response measures. Long-term approaches include structural approaches to address the root causes of conflict, including inequality and harmful gender norms and emerging sources of conflict, including the impacts of climate change and competition over natural resources.

Secondly, in resolution 1366 (2001), the Council highlighted the absence of a comprehensive United Nations conflict-prevention strategy. However, this strategy requires a more coherent implementation plan to adequately support Member States and their people in advancing their prevention priorities. We see it clearly at the field level. The Council should request that the Secretary-General appoint a group of experts to develop guidelines on what effective national, regional and global prevention strategies look like, for Member States to draw upon as appropriate, and conduct an assessment of the United Nations systems capacities for conflict prevention, with concrete recommendations being operationalized through a dedicated process.

Thirdly, as a result of the leadership of Pacific women peacebuilders, resolution 2242 (2015) on women and peace and security also noted the changing global context of peace and security, in particular relating to the impacts of climate change. The Council recognized the adverse effects that climate change has on peace and security in many situations. We encourage the Council to provide normative and operational guidance to the United Nations system for addressing peace and security risks and opportunities posed by climate change.

Fourthly, with the launch of the Pacific Women Mediators Network in June 2023, the process of women's engagement in the Pacific can become more streamlined across various Government priorities, including climate action, development, peace and security, and human rights. We encourage the Council to request that the Secretary-General develop concrete policy guidance on how the United Nations could specifically support women mediators' networks, including those that are locally led.

Fifthly, a more comprehensive approach to conflict prevention requires inclusion. The Council should prioritize consistent engagement on the youth, peace and security agenda in its work. That entails regular inclusion of the youth, peace and security agenda and ensuring young women have the opportunity to brief the Council, as well as hosting an open debate to discuss the Secretary-General's report on youth, peace and security upon its release.

Finally, the Council should build on the gains achieved by the General Assembly resolution on financing for peacebuilding (resolution 76/305) and adequately operationalize its provisions on financing for women, youth and local peacebuilders, as well as adequate and sustainable financing for prevention and peacebuilding.

Conflict prevention works. Our recent research found that investing \$30,000 in women-led prevention can bring a return on financial investment of up to \$1 million. If our collective goal is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, it is imperative that we shift from reaction to prevention and inclusive human security grounded in the analysis and practices of local communities. We encourage the Council to consider our recommendations, and we offer our support in advancing prevention priorities across the conflict cycle and the triple nexus.

The President: I thank Ms. Bhagwan Rolls for her briefing.

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

I sincerely thank Ms. DiCarlo, Ambassador Franca Danese, Professor Williams and Ms. Bhagwan Rolls for their insightful briefings.

Peace can be sustained when we can prevent conflicts from erupting and prevent their resurgence once they end. If a conflict is prevented, we can avoid the human

tragedy and the devastating political, socioeconomic and financial impacts that it brings. By contrast, it is far more difficult to manage conflicts once they break out and to restore peace. That is one of the reasons why the Security Council is determined to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in preventing conflict. Effective prevention requires comprehensive approaches that are tailored to each context and reflect the needs and opinions of all people on the ground. In his New Agenda for Peace, the Secretary-General emphasized the importance of conflict prevention and recommended that all States, not just conflict-affected or fragile ones, invest in national prevention capacities involving the whole of society, and formulate national strategies for prevention.

Today's open debate is devoted to hearing ideas from Member States on what role the Security Council can play in effectively supporting nationally led efforts in prevention, and in contributing to discussions for the Summit of the Future and the 2025 review of the peacebuilding architecture.

Japan would like to raise three points on how the Security Council can more effectively prevent conflict and its recurrence. First, the Council should recognize that sustainable peace cannot be achieved just by ceasing violence but by also building resilience on the ground and upholding the human dignity of every individual. That can be realized through a long-term, comprehensive and inclusive approach that covers mid- and post- conflict stages, ensures the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and empowers all people, including women and youth, by ensuring their full, equal and meaningful participation. The mandates of peace operations should include capacity-building support for the host country and its people, in order to prevent the recurrence of conflict. As the sixty-eighth annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women has begun, the Council should also reaffirm our commitment to upholding the women and peace and security agenda.

Secondly, the Security Council must enhance collaboration in order to fully utilize the United Nations toolbox. The Council can promote the empowerment and participation of all actors through collaboration between peace operations, other United Nations agencies and beyond. Such closer coordination will enable the Council to translate early warnings of potential conflicts into decisive preventive action and to prepare more feasible and concrete transition plans

for peace operations well ahead of their withdrawals. Japan is currently engaging in discussions with the relevant United Nations bodies on how to effectively implement collaborative support for nationally led prevention initiatives on the ground.

Thirdly, the Council must utilize the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to discuss nationally led prevention in detail, since the PBC is both an advisory body to the Council and a hub to convene national authorities and actors, other United Nations bodies, regional organizations, international financial institutions and others. As the informal coordinator between the PBC and the Council this year, Japan will contribute to strengthening cooperation between them, together with the members of both bodies.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate Japan's continuous commitment to utilizing the capacities of the United Nations to advance prevention and peacebuilding for sustainable peace.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now call on the Minister of Solidarity, the Family and the Status of Women of Algeria, Ms. Kaoutar Krikou.

Ms. Krikou (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Japan for convening this open debate.

We meet against the backdrop of a tragic reality in which women and girls in conflict areas, in particular in the occupied Palestinian territories, face flagrant and systematic violations of their dignity and grave acts of aggression against their basic rights. That requires the international community to take a firm stance.

The empowerment of women has been a top priority for the Algerian State since its liberation from the yoke of colonialism, based on its belief that women and men have equal rights and in recognition of the major role played by Algerian women throughout the history of the Algerian nation, in particularly during the glorious liberation revolution. Today Algeria remains true to its established traditions, pursuing the empowerment of women at all levels. Moreover, the advancement of women is a top priority for the highest-ranking Algerian officials.

We meet today at a crossroads, with conflicts raging in various parts of the world, violence on the rise, and the resolution of protracted crises appearing unattainable.

Therefore, it is imperative that we intensify our efforts and adopt a more effective approach that prevents the outbreak of conflicts and addresses their root causes.

Algeria has advocated and continues to advocate for a comprehensive, proactive approach that takes into account the multiple dimensions of conflicts, in particular those related to development, as there is no security without development and no development without security. We cannot pursue such an approach without the participation of all vital components of society, especially women and youth, in the relevant processes. Women are a pillar of societies and an element of national cohesion, as they promote dialogue and favour the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Nevertheless, more often than not, their voices are ignored in the decision-making process on conflict resolution. We must therefore ensure that women are able to take their rightful place at the sustainable peacebuilding table.

We reiterate Algeria's determination, as affirmed by the President of the Republic, Mr. Abdelmadjid Tebboune, to promote the role of women in peace and security and advance their position in various spheres of life at the national, continental and international levels. Algeria is also committed to advancing the role of women in conflict resolution and prevention, in line with the principles underpinning Algeria's foreign policy. Our commitment was embodied in the practical national plan which was formulated in July 2023 for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the aim of which is to promote the role of women in peace and security issues. That has enabled Algeria to effectively engage with all the pillars of the resolution.

The youth are the mainstay of the present and the power of the future. They are the foundation upon which every society is built and achieves prosperity. Unfortunately, they also ignite conflicts and are the first to fall victim to them. Therefore, we must benefit from their ambitions and aspirations as a driving force for positive change. In that regard, the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in 2025 will provide the opportunity to evaluate and adjust the available means for conflict prevention and to improve our performance in peacebuilding, while ensuring the genuine and effective participation of women and youth alike.

We cannot address today's topic without mentioning the suffering of the Palestinian people. They are facing the killing machine and the destructive

force of the occupation forces. Palestinian women, in particular, have continued to suffer since the Nakba of their country and the occupation of its territories. Their suffering has been exacerbated by the recent aggression against the unarmed Palestinian people, in particular those in the besieged Gaza Strip. We cannot adequately describe the suffering of Palestinian women in Gaza along with the pain and horror they are facing. There are more than 9,000 women and girls who have been martyred since the start of the aggression against the Gaza Strip. Every day, 63 women, 37 of whom are mothers, become martyrs. Every hour, two mothers become martyrs. And 75 per cent of those injured are women. That is indeed a war against Palestinian women and children. All who advocate for women's just cause must not remain silent. They must call for an end to the barbaric killing machine being used against Palestinian men and women.

In conclusion, achieving the objectives of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015) requires concerted efforts at all levels in the context of international solidarity, which has unfortunately shown its limited capacity to address socioeconomic issues in order to prevent conflicts and achieve sustainable security.

The President: I now call on the Minister of Women and Human Rights Affairs of Ecuador, Ms. Arianna Tanca.

Ms. Tanca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to highlight Japan's work during its presidency of the Security Council and the timely manner with which it is addressing this issue, given the spiral of violence created by the security vacuum of inequality, mistrust and exclusion. I thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Ambassador Sérgio França Danese, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, whose advisory role to the Security Council is of key importance; and the civil society representatives.

Peace, development and security are interdependent. It only takes one missing pillar for crises and conflicts to escalate. The current situation has been exacerbated by the large number of people in conflict situations, which has exponentially increased humanitarian needs. Gains in human development have been lost, and the goal of the hopeful slogan that we came up with when we adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of "leaving no one behind" has become improbable. The comprehensive approach

of resolution 2171 (2014) to conflict prevention and peacebuilding refers to the need to address the root causes of conflicts, including through strengthening the rule of law, economic and social development, poverty eradication, national reconciliation, good governance, democracy, gender equality and respect for human rights. Unfortunately, statistics show that women and girls suffer the most from the disproportionate effects of violence and that a minimal percentage of funding goes to organizations dedicated to the protection of their rights, thereby undermining the key role that women play in peacebuilding and development.

The action taken by the Security Council with regard to peacekeeping operations, as well as special political missions, is key to fostering greater inclusion and meaningful participation by women and youth. The Peacebuilding Commission has a central role to play in sharing good practices and lessons learned by presenting examples in which women's leadership has been recognized and their voices heard on the road towards peacebuilding and in which, without them, it would not have been possible to start the structural transformations to achieve equality, reconciliation and non-repetition. But that path is exceptional. More often, in such situations, women have not only been left out of their countries' policymaking processes, but their fundamental rights have also been denied and violated, while the economy and the social fabric of their countries has been undermined. Resolution 1325 (2000) provides for strengthening efforts to guarantee their protection and increase their participation, and paves the way forward. We therefore urge States to adopt specific measures to ensure its full implementation.

The Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund play a catalytic role in building bridges with international and regional financial institutions to carry out planning at the national level, especially in developing countries. The Pact for the Future, which is currently being negotiated, and the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, which we will undertake in 2025, provide the opportunity to renew and strengthen the role of the Peacebuilding Commission while conveying a proactive message based on the support that can be provided to countries in conflict or post-conflict situations, based on their needs, with a strong emphasis on preventive diplomacy and mediation. One chapter of the Pact is dedicated to young people. My delegation believes that it is time to improve systems aimed at exchanges

with young people, deepen intergenerational solidarity and support their meaningful, equitable and gender-sensitive participation, which will enable the transition to a more inclusive, peaceful and secure world.

Ecuador understands that the road to sustainable peace is built on inclusive dialogue and fostering social cohesion. That is our commitment and our priority, as a member of the Council. We are building our national plan, sealed with a sense of belonging, that will enable the full, equitable, meaningful and safe participation of women in mediation, peacebuilding and peacekeeping processes, in close coordination with the relevant United Nations bodies, regional organizations and local agencies. The Government of Ecuador enjoys a greater level of participation by women and young people, and their inclusion as actors to effect the changes is necessary for building peace and equality as the pillars required for development. A few days ago we commemorated International Women's Day. We have to understand that we can no longer continue to be mere observers of processes, but must be leaders in bringing about change, as women are the face of peace.

The President: I now call on the Minister of Human Services and Social Security of Guyana, Ms. Vindhya Persaud.

Ms. Persaud (Guyana): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on a very important issue. I also thank the briefers for their presentations.

In our increasingly volatile world, marred by conflict that is exacerbated by climate change and multifaceted insecurity that threatens the socioeconomic development of millions of people, the root causes of conflict must be examined, with emphasis on its prevention. Prevention must be our collective priority. Countries have the primary responsibility in conflict prevention through poverty reduction, inclusivity, good governance and national peacebuilding strategies. Those efforts should be bolstered by regional and international collaboration. The United Nations, through its agencies, funds and programmes, can support Member States through context-specific capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and resource mobilization. Preventative diplomacy and recourse to the peaceful means of settling disputes listed in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations should be emphasized. As the primary body charged with maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council must prioritize the prevention of conflict and of its recurrence, paying due attention

to early warnings. We also recognize the critical contribution of the Peacebuilding Commission in promoting this endeavour.

When crafting comprehensive conflict-prevention strategies, the empowerment of, investment in and participation of those disproportionately affected in conflict and post-conflict settings must be considered. In that regard, it is imperative that all actors, including women and youth, are key players in conflict prevention. Evidence shows that when there is meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution, the agreements are more likely to succeed. Higher levels of gender equality in countries are associated with lower rates of conflict in and between States. Yet, women's representation in peace and security processes continues to lag. We must do more to ensure international and national policies guarantee women's inclusion in decision-making processes.

It is also imperative that we address the challenges faced by youth, including lack of opportunities and resources, as we seek to unlock their full potential in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. They, too, must be involved in decision-making processes, as we leverage their energy and creativity to address the root causes of conflict and promote peace. The women and peace and security and the youth, peace and security agendas are mutually reinforcing, and the priorities therein should be reflected in products of the Council.

In an interconnected world, the challenges faced by one country can have an impact on others. Enhanced collaboration and innovative solutions strengthen the synergies between peacebuilding actors in addressing the complex challenges of conflict prevention. As the primary organ mandated to maintain international peace and security, the Security Council, in collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission, international financial institutions and other United Nations agencies, can garner a broader perspective and an increased scope of experience to address the root causes of conflict and support sustainable peace processes. That requires aligning development and peacebuilding ideals. Additionally, as peacekeeping operations withdraw from host countries, maintaining and building on the progress achieved is paramount. National development strategies should include the sustained delivery of essential services, political and national engagements and the strengthening of local security and economic sectors. Ensuring the inclusion and commitment of all stakeholders is vital.

Finally, the intrinsic link between peace and sustainable development must be underscored. The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals must remain a foremost priority for all. Guyana continues to do its part in that pursuit, to improve the lives of all its people.

Ms. Huang Xiaowei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I welcome your presence, Mr. President, and thank you for presiding over this meeting today. I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Ambassador Frana Danese, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the two representatives of civil society, and welcome them. I am pleased to attend today's meeting as Deputy Head of the National Working Committee on Children and Women of the State Council of China.

Conflict prevention and the maintenance of international peace and security will not be possible without the broad participation of women and youth. Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015), adopted successively by the Security Council, fully recognize the important contribution of women and youth to peace processes and offer important guidance for our efforts to advance their participation in peace and development. We are pleased to see that the role of women is being increasingly celebrated and the participation of youth further deepened in pursuit of sustainable peace.

Against the backdrop of the turbulent international situation, it is necessary to further support the empowerment of women and youth, help them to better respond to the changing world and tap into their wisdom and potential in furthering peace and development. Experience and lessons learned both show that resolving development issues, such as poverty, unemployment and income inequality, as a priority can help to prevent and respond to conflicts at their roots. It is imperative to support the economic empowerment and capacity-building of women and youth, ensure their education and employment opportunities, and equip them with the skills and the knowledge necessary to change their own fate and transform their families and communities. That in turn can undergird the efforts to maintain stability, promote development and realize lasting peace. We support further explorations and efforts by the United Nations to advance the empowerment of women and youth.

China always firmly advocates and actively works for the empowerment and advancement of women and youth. We are committed to implementing the Beijing

Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and have adopted legislation, policies and measures to ensure women can share the benefits of economic and social development across the board. We have consecutively implemented four cycles of the women's development programme, have lifted more than 44.16 million rural Chinese women from absolute poverty and have generally eliminated the gender disparity in compulsory education. Currently, women account for more than 40 per cent of all workers in China, approximately 45.8 per cent of tech workers and approximately one third of operators in new business areas, such as digital trade, e-commerce and livestreaming.

We attach great importance to the advancement of youth and have enacted and implemented national plans dedicated to their all-around growth. With more than 240 pro-youth policies in, inter alia, education and employment, more than 187 cities nationwide have taken the initiative to explore urban development geared towards youth. More and more young people are becoming the leading force for scientific and technological innovation, rural revitalization and international cooperation.

As a responsible Power and an important member of the global South, China has been providing concrete support to the economic empowerment and capacity-building of women and youth in developing countries, including in conflict areas. In the Central African Republic, Chinese agricultural technology teams have helped nearly 14,000 villagers in seven villages close to the capital to build mushroom sheds, chicken farms and sheep pens, thereby setting them on the path towards poverty elimination and prosperity. In the Solomon Islands, Chinese-aided fishing boats and farmers' markets have provided new income-generation opportunities for local women and young people. In Afghanistan, the Sino-Afghan pine nut air corridor generates tens of millions of dollars in income for Afghans every year, thereby contributing to economic recovery and social stability there.

China and UNESCO have collaborated to launch a prize for girls and women's education. China has helped developing countries to implement 100 maternal and child health-care projects and 100 "Happy Schools" projects. China has incorporated cooperation and exchanges in women's advancement into multilateral mechanisms such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum. It has also

successfully organized international events such as the international youth forum on the Belt and Road Initiative, the World Youth Development Forum and the World Young Scientist Summit to help to foster a broad international consensus and strong synergy in support of the advancement of women and youth.

We must not forget the mothers in Gaza despairing in the throes of war, the Afghan girls living in deprivation or the young people threatened by poverty, conflict and terror across the world. Let us work together to push for greater international input and join hands in our tireless endeavour to safeguard the rights and interests of women and youth and to usher in a better world.

The President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of the United States and member of President Biden's Cabinet.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I want to start by thanking Japan for convening today's open debate on conflict prevention. I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Ambassador França Danese, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their insights. I also want to thank our civil society briefers, Mr. Williams and Ms. Bhagwan Rolls. I welcome all of the Ministers of Council members visiting the Council today.

We meet during the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, when leaders from around the world come together to advance gender equity, to unlock economic and educational opportunities for women and girls and to protect and promote the fundamental freedoms and rights of all. Our success in all of that critical work hinges on one thing: peace. Everything we do to empower women and everything women do to empower themselves is eroded by conflict. As we know, women and girls are disproportionately impacted by conflict, displacement, food insecurity, sexual violence and all of the horrors of war.

If we just look at the civil war in the Sudan, that horrific, senseless conflict has forced millions of women and girls from their homes. It is exposing them to rape and other forms of sexual violence. With the destruction of health-care facilities, they have almost no access to health care or psychosocial support services.

For all we know about the impact that conflict has on women and girls, there is so much that never cracks the surface. Because of underreporting, stigma and legitimate privacy and safety concerns, it is difficult to

prevent and monitor the unique risks faced by women and girls in violent settings, to adequately support survivors with victim-centred, trauma-sensitive approaches and to effectively pursue post-conflict peacebuilding and justice.

We must prioritize gender issues in the Council, and we must centre women and peace and security in our work. The United States is committed to United Nations conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts, including through our implementation of the United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability and the United States Strategy and National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

But that work requires every single one of us. It requires collective action. Today I would like to discuss four ways in which we can strengthen our cooperation around conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

First, we need to support the important work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission's convening power within and beyond the United Nations system enables integrated, strategic and coherent approaches to building and sustaining peace. The Council should look to the Commission's advice, which reflects the expertise of civil society, Governments, international financial institutions and regional bodies. We welcome efforts to establish more ambitious, structured collaboration between the Security Council and the Commission.

Secondly, I want to emphasize that United Nations peace operations and peacebuilding efforts are successful only when they are supported by a committed and accountable host Government. As we work to achieve smoother and more sustainable transitions, we must commit to advanced and holistic planning across the United Nations system. Through the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council, we must also work closely with host Governments to ensure that missions have the resources they need to successfully transition and to plan and support for the day after.

Thirdly, the Council must view peace, development and humanitarian issues as inextricably bound together. When one is hamstrung, all are hamstrung. Therefore, our approach to those issues must be complementary and coordinated. As part of the Summit of the Future process and in the lead up to the 2025 peacebuilding architecture review, we must consider how more inclusive peacebuilding can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goals

on climate. We know that climate change causes displacement, threatens economic and food security and exacerbates conflict and instability. In short, its consequences are far-reaching and linked. Its impact is borne disproportionately by the world's most vulnerable, including women and girls. That crisis demands a robust response not only from our national Governments and United Nations entities such as the climate security mechanism, but also from the Security Council within its mandate.

Fourthly and finally, I want to highlight the transformative impact that women and young leaders can have on peacebuilding processes. We know that when women are at the table and able to participate fully, equally and meaningfully, peacebuilding efforts are more successful and peace is more durable. The same is true with young leaders. Today's youth population is the largest recorded, and engaging them in peace processes mitigates the risk that nations will be pulled back into conflict. Those young leaders, who are already taking the baton and running with it, and who are already creating the change they want to see in the world, give me tremendous hope.

The women I meet throughout my travels who are supporting their families and supporting peace efforts also give me tremendous hope. The women who are here this week during the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women give me hope. They are all different — they bring different experiences and different backgrounds to the table — but they are unified in their efforts to empower women as peacebuilders. Let us look to their example. Let us lift up their voices and let us do all that we can to advance peace and security for all.

Ms. Alghali (Sierra Leone): The delegation of Sierra Leone wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on the very important topic "Peacebuilding and sustaining peace: promoting conflict prevention — empowering all actors including women and youth". I also want to thank the briefers: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; His Excellency Mr. Sérgio França Danese, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission; Mr. Abiodun Williams, Professor of the Practice of International Politics at Tufts University; and Ms. Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, Programme Manager of the Pacific Women Mediators Network and

International Steering Group Gender Liaison for the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, for their insightful perspectives on this topic.

The topic for today is quite relevant and timely. We also commend the focus on women and youth, given their role and the fact that they make up the larger percentage of the global population. The twin General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on sustaining peace adopted in 2016, General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), offered an opportunity for the United Nations system to rethink how to prevent and address violent conflicts in a more holistic and inclusive way, focused on addressing the root causes and using a three-pillar approach. The resolutions provide a blueprint that suggests that, to prevent the occurrence and recurrence of conflict, the United Nations and all other regional and subregional bodies and national stakeholders of peace and security should move towards people-centred comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of conflict. In essence, there is a need to invest in human development, economic opportunities and social cohesion as pillars for sustainable peace.

That means that a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention should involve strengthening governance architecture, the provision of decent jobs, the protection of human rights, addressing food insecurity, facilitating access to justice and equality and consultative participation in the political governance system. Traditional approaches to conflict prevention have often focused on military and security measures such as peacekeeping and arms control. While those measures can play a role, they are often not enough to address the root causes of conflict. Comprehensive approaches take a broader view, recognizing that conflict often arises from a complex interplay of factors, including poverty, inequality, discrimination — especially against women and youth — environmental degradation and weak governance.

In the light of that, the Secretary-General has provided a road map to prevent future conflicts and achieve global sustainable peace. He has noted that, in order to protect and manage the global public good of peace, we need a peace continuum based on a better understanding of the drivers and systems of influence that are sustaining conflict, a renewed effort to agree

on more effective collective security responses, and a meaningful set of steps to manage emerging risks with a view to preventing conflict.

In his New Agenda for Peace, the Secretary-General calls for a number of specific actions. First, he calls for promoting comprehensive approaches to conflict prevention, including by strengthening the United Nations preventive capacities. That includes investing in early warning systems, mediation resources and conflict resolution expertise. Secondly, he calls for promoting partnerships, including working with Governments, civil society organizations and the private sector, to address the root causes of conflict. Finally, he calls for focusing on prevention, which includes shifting resources from conflict response to conflict prevention and investing in initiatives that build resilience and address grievances before they escalate into violence.

As we contemplate enhancing the United Nations conflict prevention architecture and engage in discussions to shape the upcoming Pact of the Future, it is crucial to acknowledge inequalities alongside unaddressed grievances and exclusion, especially of women and youth, as strategic risks to peace and security. In our approach to conflict prevention, we must also draw lessons from past experiences, recognizing instances in which early warning signs and recommendations put forward by United Nations bodies, including the special procedures mandate, were not effectively implemented. Those oversights underscore the imperative of heeding early warnings and implementing recommendations swiftly and effectively to prevent conflicts from escalating.

That therefore begs the question: how do we empower and invest in people, especially women and youth, to promote conflict prevention?

First, we must embrace inclusivity and diversity by ensuring the meaningful participation of women, youth, marginalized communities and civil society in national and regional peace processes. In that regard, we must champion gender equality as a critical factor in preventing conflict and building lasting peace. Women as peacebuilders are essential in resolving conflict through effective engagement and mediation. As the Secretary-General reported last year, women are still underrepresented, not just in narrow peace talks among a small set of actors, but in broad-based national and regional dialogues in which inclusion

should be paramount and gender parity achievable. Let us commit to making sure that the initiatives of grassroots peacebuilders are recognized and supported and that more formal and higher-level peacebuilding efforts, including national dialogues, start taking parity seriously.

Secondly, Member States should support national and local capacities for conflict resolution, governance and sustainable development. In view of that, we must respect the agency and leadership of local communities in shaping their own peacebuilding efforts, with women and youth undertaking leadership roles. In Sierra Leone's peacebuilding journey with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the principle of national ownership was strictly adhered to, with the initiatives proffered by the country fully supported by the Commission.

Thirdly, efforts should be geared towards promoting dialogue, reconciliation and cross-cultural understanding to heal divisions and build trust between communities and countries, with women and youth in the forefront of discussions. Additionally, addressing, through transparent and accountable mechanisms, the grievances and injustices that fuel conflict should be prioritized.

Finally, we must integrate sustainable development into peace processes by recognizing the strong link between poverty, environmental degradation and conflict. We should therefore invest in initiatives that promote economic growth, resource management and climate resilience with a view to achieving long-term stability.

In Sierra Leone, we are already implementing the New Agenda for Peace. We have adopted and are currently implementing the Wan Fambul — “one family” — Framework, a national development framework for inclusive community-led planning and development as part of our medium-term development priorities. The framework came out of 13 years of peacebuilding fieldwork during and after the conflict in Sierra Leone by Fambul Tok — “family talk” — a Sierra Leonean non-governmental organization working in partnership with Catalyst for Peace. The Wan Fambul Framework not only is a planning and development tool, but also establishes social cohesion structures in communities and gives women a strong voice in peacebuilding through the establishment of peace mothers' support groups in communities. They are active in election campaigns, advocacy and education, addressing conflict situations

early before they become full blown conflagrations. The framework is a model for transformative partnerships between national Governments, civil society and international donor partners.

We have also established an Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion to promote peace and development in the country through dialogue, while paving the way for political cohesion and the mediation of disputes. The Commission was very instrumental in facilitating the ongoing peaceful dialogue between the Government and the main opposition party to address issues emerging from our multi-tier elections in June 2023, leading to the signing of the Agreement for National Unity and its current implementation.

In conclusion, preventing conflict takes a multilateral effort by the United Nations system, the international community, member States and civil society organizations. This collaborative effort should not only be about sustaining peace but also about addressing the drivers and root causes of conflict. In all of this, national ownership remains fundamental, and the meaningful participation of women and youth an imperative.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Under-Secretary-General of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs DiCarlo, the Permanent Representative of Brazil and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Mr. Sérgio França Danese, and other briefers for their substantive insights.

Conflict prevention is undoubtedly the main task of the Security Council under the Charter of the United Nations. Despite the fact that it has been possible thus far to protect the planet from another large-scale war, the world is in the deepest crisis in decades, which manifests itself through the erosion of the international security system, loss of trust among key players and the escalation of conflicts around the globe. In many ways, the unfolding processes are signs of cracks in the unipolar world, which must be replaced by a new world order. What that will look like will depend on us.

The Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace calls on Member States to shape the international system by restoring trust and building solidarity, making fuller use of the tools of diplomacy and political dialogue. Conflict prevention is of paramount importance. While we fully support these noble aspirations, we must also note a certain discrepancy between the real situation

and the declared intentions, which, in our view, reduces the effectiveness of the United Nations efforts in this area.

On paper, we all say that national plans and priorities should stand at the centre of preventive and peacebuilding actions. However, donor countries have a direct influence on where funds are allocated. As a result, money is often spent on funding the priorities of Western donors rather than on the real needs of recipient countries. This includes the “securitization” of the climate agenda, as well as the bias towards the political and human rights aspects of the women and youth agendas. At the same time, not enough attention is paid to genuine factors of instability, such as the socioeconomic situation of the population, including of women and young people, as vulnerable groups.

Instead, the approach being used is that some human rights, gender and climate-related measures serve as “universal indicators” of conflict, by which international officials should be guided when determining the need for preventive action by the United Nations. Such an approach not only violates the division of labour between the Security Council and other United Nations organs, but also increases risks of abuse and puts undue pressure on sovereign States, under the cover of the United Nations.

Regrettably, such intrusive attitudes have implications for the interaction on the ground between the United Nations and host States. Quite often, a lack of understanding of host States’ political and peacebuilding priorities, and “flirting” with civil society and non-governmental organizations, to the detriment of engagement with Governments, triggers a crisis of communication between international civil servants and country authorities. In some cases, the United Nations is able to restore Governments’ trust, while in others, the unwillingness to adopt a flexible and balanced approach leads to a complete breakdown in relations. Naturally, that is not conducive to resolving conflicts or preventing their recurrence.

We believe that no one can tell sovereign Governments how to build their States, to prevent conflict, to organize a legal system or what percentage of women to include in political processes. Such an approach is a relic of the colonial past and cannot be the basis for truly effective prevention efforts. We firmly believe that the role of the United Nations and the international community, as a whole, is to provide support to States that independently determine,

and bear primary responsibility for, their strategies for responding to security challenges within their national borders.

With regard to the discussion’s focus on strengthening the role of women and young people, the Russian Federation fully shares the view that women and young people can and do make a significant contribution to the work of United Nations organs and agencies, including in the areas of conflict prevention and resolution.

At the same time, we note that characteristics such as age and gender can in no way be determining factors for the involvement of individuals in decision-making processes, especially on sensitive issues such as the maintenance of peace and security. In this context, what matters most is professional knowledge and skills. Disregarding that aspect for the sake of the appearance of diversity is unacceptable, as it will put people’s lives at risk.

Another equally important aspect is the lack of an intergovernmentally agreed definition of the concept of youth. As we know, that age category often includes persons under 18 years of age — those whom the Convention on the Rights of the Child defines as children. We believe that it is justified to protect young people, who are still minors, from any political activity because of their physical and intellectual immaturity. In that regard, efforts are also needed to prevent the instrumentalization of young people and to counter attempts to present the interests of certain political groups as the “view of the younger generation”.

Lastly, in the context of international efforts to maintain peace and security, priority should be given to combating poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, the negative effects of which disproportionately affect women and young people more so than the rest of the population, and are at the root of social instability.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate on a subject that we believe is key. I also thank the briefers for their valuable contributions and enlightening insights.

A month ago, the Council followed the path of a sustainable peace cycle in Colombia. From prevention to mediation to peacebuilding, the three stages of the cycle were all visible and often overlapping. In the south of the country, we met former combatants, who are now working in mine clearance. In Buenaventura, on the Pacific coast, we listened to the testimonies of

young people from the Afro-Colombian minority who are facing violence. In Bogotá, we met women who are anchoring peace at the heart of local communities and political leaders who are committed to consolidating the 2016 agreement through dialogue.

In Colombia, we witnessed first-hand that a lasting peace is built by motivated and empowered individuals, whose actions are magnified tenfold by networks and guided by a broader strategy, which requires international support. As each society and community is unique, so too must be the approach to prevention. National and regional prevention strategies based on human rights are therefore an instrument of first choice. In that respect, Switzerland refers to the statement to be delivered on behalf of the Human Rights and Conflict Prevention Caucus.

But what makes a good prevention strategy? How can we prevent violent conflicts and promote peace in each situation? It is a matter of looking at the specific risks that can lead to violence and identifying their root causes in order to prevent their recurrence. No one is better placed to carry out that analysis than the men and women who are agents of change: parliamentarians, farm workers, local police officers, students, schoolchildren and the young people who are fighting against the odds for a better future.

However, those individuals must not remain isolated, and their capacity to defend peace must be strengthened. That is why effective prevention, as called for by the Secretary-General in his New Agenda for Peace, is aimed at providing information, accessible tools and safe spaces for the participation of women, young people and marginalized groups, as is investing in local prevention initiatives. Because at the local level, civil society — and women in particular — often create their own small islands of peace. A prevention strategy must therefore link those islands to transform them into national — and indeed, international — archipelagos.

A genuine network for change to catalyse national efforts must be created — a network that links the public and private sectors, the humanitarian sector, development cooperation and civil society, extending from the smallest village to conference rooms at the United Nations. It is only in networks that we can learn from each other and draw lessons, for example, from national action plans on the women and peace and security agenda, while mobilizing the resources needed for prevention.

Within those networks, the role of the Peacebuilding Commission must be strengthened, its resources enhanced and our commitment to it increased tenfold. The Pact for the Future and the 2025 review of the peacebuilding architecture give us the opportunity to do just that. The Security Council must in turn fully integrate that network by systematically taking into account the Commission's opinions on the situations on its agenda and by lending its support to national preventive actions, as it did in Colombia. The Council can also act through Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations and make more skilful use of the tools at its disposal for the peaceful settlement of disputes. The resolutions we adopt and missions we mandate are supports for the country concerned.

As we have seen in Colombia, peace is built in a cycle that begins with prevention and connects all actors for change. As the Colombian peace activist Rosa Emilia Salamanca said during our visit:

(spoke in Spanish)

“We will always be there to build peace. We are a force for peace”.

(spoke in French)

Therefore, let us also do our part.

Mr. Afonso (Mozambique): Mozambique would like to commend the Japanese presidency for convening today's important meeting. We thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo. We also thank the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, His Excellency Ambassador Sérgio França Danese. We extend our gratitude to Mr. Abiodun Williams and Ms. Sharon Bhagwan Rolls for their insightful briefings.

We embrace the view that preventive diplomacy should be centre stage in present-day interactions between States and peoples. We are witnesses to high geopolitical tensions worldwide that are increasingly testing the boundaries set in the Charter of the United Nations, which mandates all Member States to settle their differences by peaceful means. The pursuit of military solutions has been a prominent feature of recent conflicts, even when dialogue and negotiations have not been exhausted or even attempted. As a consequence, civilians — mostly children and women — are paying a heavy toll. Furthermore, non-State actors pose a formidable challenge everywhere in the world, rendering conflict resolution an increasingly difficult endeavour.

We are confronted with those global challenges, and we are therefore called upon to pool our collective efforts in order to address the root causes of conflicts before they erupt. Conflict prevention should guide our collaborative action all the time. We believe it is essential that we do more to maximize the use of preventive diplomacy. In retrospect, important lessons can be drawn from some devastating conflicts that could have been averted, had preventive diplomacy been the preferred instrument in relations between or within States.

We wish to emphasize the importance of national ownership in conflict prevention. It is the duty of each State to hold the primary responsibility for preventing conflicts, addressing their causes and preventing their recurrence. We also think that leadership and statespersonship are important in building bridges of dialogue and cooperation. We believe that States must invest more in the development of strong democratic institutions, respect for and the protection of human rights, and the implementation of post-conflict recovery programmes and sustainable development policies to promote collective security, peace and stability. The involvement of all sectors of society in conflict prevention is of paramount importance. That includes women and youth in particular, who play a crucial role in preventing and resolving conflicts and building sustainable peace.

In the light of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, close collaboration between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations must be encouraged in early warning, in the involvement of national networks and in the coordination of regional responses.

According to our own national experience in Mozambique, peacebuilding is by nature a preventive mechanism. In that context, the Peacebuilding Commission plays an important role in advising, directing and supporting United Nations efforts to prevent conflict and maintain international peace and security.

To conclude, we would like to emphasize that, in the face of escalating geopolitical tensions, the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations must further strengthen their coordination and cooperation. Promoting the full use of diplomatic tools and mechanisms outlined in the Charter of the United Nations is crucial for preventing conflicts and resolving them in a peaceful manner.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): Let me join others in thanking our briefers, Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Ambassador França Danese, Mr. Williams and Ms. Bhagwan Rolls for their briefings today.

In 2014, the United Kingdom led the development of resolution 2171 (2014). That resolution, which was unanimously adopted, underlined the moral, political and humanitarian imperatives and the economic advantages of preventing conflict. It called for intensified efforts to prevent conflict, drawing on a range of tools. Ten years on, that call is even more relevant. The United Kingdom is therefore grateful to Japan for convening today's debate.

I will make three points on how the Council and the wider international architecture can better promote conflict prevention, empowering all actors.

First, we can do more to empower women as agents of peace. Gender equality is a strong indicator of sustainable peace, and peace processes are more durable when women are at the table. The Council could be even more robust in advocating for women's full, equal, safe and meaningful inclusion in peace, development, mediation and decision-making processes. We need to do so, from Afghanistan to the Sudan, and globally, we should continue striving to increase the proportion of women peacekeepers and peacebuilders.

Secondly, we can help generate broad, inclusive national ownership of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Peace is not organic. The need to nurture it is universal. Yes, States have that primary responsibility, but the evidence shows that inclusive, nationally led and locally rooted efforts deliver more sustainable results. Young peacebuilders are often best placed to break the cycle of violence in local communities — a principle we apply to our own violence-reduction strategies in the United Kingdom. The Council can therefore throw its weight behind inclusive national processes to build and sustain peace, as we have in Colombia. We can empower the Peacebuilding Commission to play its part as a space to mobilize political and financial support, and we can advocate for the Peacebuilding Fund and the United Nations Development Programme-United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention — both of which the United Kingdom is proud to support.

Finally, we can empower the wider international architecture as a companion in conflict prevention by working to deepen partnerships and advance integrated approaches. We should insist on the application of the Secretary-General's Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning in United Nations mission settings. We should pursue closer cooperation with regional organizations, and we should continue to encourage collaboration between the United Nations and the World Bank in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence. That partnership that is increasingly generating peace dividends, from the Gambia to Somalia and beyond.

The Summit of the Future and the 2025 review of the peacebuilding architecture are opportunities to reinvigorate our collective efforts to prevent conflict. Let us seize them.

Mr. Hyunwoo Cho (Republic of Korea): I would like to begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Sérgio França Danese, and Mr. Williams and Ms. Bhagwan Rolls for their insightful briefings today.

The Republic of Korea aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by Guatemala on behalf of the Human Rights and Conflict Prevention Caucus. I would now like to deliver the following statement in our national capacity.

The world is facing the highest number of violent conflicts since the foundation of the United Nations, with 2 billion people — one quarter of humankind — living in conflict-affected areas. This meeting comes at a critical time, to ensure that efforts towards preventing conflicts and their recurrence are not sidelined while the Security Council is immersed in addressing multiple ongoing conflicts. In a bid to strengthen preventive diplomacy, I would like to highlight the following.

First, resilient institutions are the very foundation of conflict prevention, with inclusivity as its cornerstone. An inclusive peace process increases the chances of success. Multiple studies show that peace agreements that include women are approximately 35 per cent more likely to last at least 15 years. In order to ensure women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation in conflict prevention and peace processes, women peacebuilders and human rights activists should be provided with the necessary resources and protections. The Republic of Korea is committed to supporting women's participation in the peace process with our

newly launched Action with Women and Peace Fund and our annual conference, which provides a global platform to advance the women and peace and security agenda.

Secondly, well-planned transitions are key to preventing the recurrence of conflicts. We should ensure that the gains made during United Nations peace operations are safeguarded and that the host country is on a path towards sustainable development. Transitions should be planned well in advance of the drawdown in order to formulate plans based on the host country's preparedness and the capacities of United Nations country teams and agencies. We should also draw lessons from best practices, such as those employed during the transition of the United Nations Mission in Liberia. When the Security Council discussed that withdrawal, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) contributed to the Secretary-General's peacebuilding plan, developed at the request of the Council, by identifying potential sources of instability and proposing a division of work among the United Nations, regional organizations and the World Bank. The Council should utilize the PBC's complementary role in transitions by continuing to request advisory opinions in considering mandate renewals and working closely with the PBC before withdrawal. That will ensure that political and financial support are maintained after the departure of peace operations.

Finally, we should enhance our support for national and regional prevention strategies. Conflict prevention is inherently a nationally owned process and should be adapted to the local and regional context in order to effectively address root causes and new risk multipliers, such as climate change.

The New Agenda for Peace recommended the creation of a mechanism within the PBC to support national and regional prevention efforts. For its part, the Security Council can strengthen such a mechanism by providing political support to the PBC and mandating special political missions and peacekeeping operations to support the development and implementation of national and regional prevention efforts.

At this critical moment, ahead of the Summit of the Future and the 2025 review of the peacebuilding architecture, we should continue to refine our strategies for sustaining peace. The Republic of Korea reaffirms its commitment, underscored by a substantial increase in our financial contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund, to support collective efforts to that end.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I want to thank the Japanese presidency for convening this meeting. The topic is all the more relevant in the light of the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, which we support. I wish to thank the briefers — Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo; Ambassador Sérgio França Danese, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission; as well as the representatives from academia and civil society, Professor Williams and Ms. Bhagwan Rolls, respectively. I thank them for their insights.

Preventing conflicts is far more cost-effective than responding to them and their consequences. With the highest number of violent conflicts since the Second World War, it is time to put conflict prevention and peacebuilding front and centre of our priorities.

Many conflicts could be avoided by strict compliance with international law. And it starts with us. We, the Security Council members have the responsibility to lead by example. We need to uphold the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We also need to promptly respond to crisis situations as they erupt, as well as scan the horizon for emerging conflicts. The Security Council is strongest when united. Unity can help prevent conflicts, and it can save lives.

Secondly, efforts at the global, regional and national levels should be complementary and mutually reinforce each other. National prevention strategies, as proposed in the New Agenda for Peace, should be comprehensive and follow a holistic approach. It should tackle all the root causes and drivers of conflict and violence in a society. Effective prevention means providing equal opportunities, reducing inequality and poverty, ensuring respect for the rule of law, protecting human rights in their entirety, promoting the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and youth and addressing structural gender inequalities — and doing so in a climate-sensitive manner.

Today no crisis or conflict in the world can be effectively addressed without inclusion. One of the surest ways to sustainably address the underlying causes of conflict is to fully implement the women and peace and security agenda and the youth, peace and security agenda.

Women and youth are particularly affected by conflicts, whether they are civilians in directly affected areas, as is the case with refugees and internally

displaced persons, or they are directly targeted. However, they also can substantially contribute to conflict prevention and resolution, as well as long-term peacebuilding.

The United Nations system, too, needs to strengthen its capacity to deliver early warning and early action to countries that are vulnerable to conflicts over natural resources or related to environmental issues. Other international organizations, such as the International Organization for Migration, could also contribute to such efforts with their innovative tools.

In the context of one of the deadliest conflicts taking place today, to paraphrase my minister — behind the political and media landscape, most people want peace and a normal, decent life and a peaceful, safe future for their children. They should be given space to present their ideas and give us the energy to continue to advocate for peace.

That is why in Ljubljana, on 8 March — International Women's Day, my minister hosted Israeli and Palestinian women, representatives of two sister non-governmental organizations that advocate a political solution in the interest of an inclusive, sustainable and just peace. Those women are — as women have been many times throughout history — a ray of hope for positive change, a ray of hope for peace. On the basis of that hope, we will continue striving for peace in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Japan for organizing this extremely important open debate. I also thank the Under-Secretary-General and the briefers for their presentations.

I would like to emphasize three messages today.

First, the New Agenda for Peace proposed by the Secretary-General offers the opportunity for us to collectively renew our commitment to prevention. The vision put forward, which we support, combines conflict prevention, crisis response and peacebuilding. France has contributed to the elaboration of that strategy and calls on all Member States to take full advantage of it. However, conflict prevention and peacebuilding cannot be the uniform response to threats to international peace and security. We have a responsibility to react when crises arise, which is also the *raison d'être* of the Council.

Secondly, the entire United Nations system must be mobilized to address the root causes of conflict and to prevent their emergence and recurrence. The Security

Council must address situations that may constitute threats to international peace and security by supporting preventive diplomacy and mediation capabilities.

Peacekeeping operations help to address the root causes of conflict, supporting not only the State's redeployment on its territory, but also the proper management of natural resources and the fight against trafficking. Peacekeeping has never been so important for creating the space needed for the lasting political settlement of conflicts and, thus, preventing their recurrence. The legitimacy of the United Nations must be championed at a time when the reach of mercenaries is expanding, in defiance of the Organization's principles and values.

The work of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes are critical for prevention and their efforts must converge in order to accelerate sustainable development in the service of populations and build effective institutions. Responding to populations affected by humanitarian crises must also be a priority.

The Peacebuilding Commission has demonstrated its ability to bring together and promote dialogue among States, civil society, international financial institutions and regional players. It must fully implement its mandate by supporting transitional contexts and preparations for the withdrawal of peacekeeping operations.

Finally, the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and young people in conflict prevention and peacemaking increases the prospects of achieving lasting peace. There are numerous examples of that. It is particularly true in Colombia, where women negotiators and civil society members play a key role throughout peace process, its negotiations and talks. We also see it in the Philippines, where young people are at the forefront of talks and awareness campaigns promoting peaceful coexistence.

In addition, we are delighted that an increasing number of women are being invited every month to provide testimony on their role and to brief the Security Council.

It is crucial to support actions in favour of women's rights and young girls before, during and after conflict. In that regard, my country recently pledged to significantly increase its funding of women's organizations worldwide. France will continue to pursue an active feminist diplomacy and to implement concretely the Council's women and peace and security and youth, peace and security agendas.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I begin by thanking Japan for organizing this important meeting and for bringing a focus on women and peace and security. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Ambassador França Danese, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as Professor Williams and Ms. Bhagwan Rolls, for the important and valuable insights they shared with the Council today.

In the face of an increasing number of crises, the multilateral system must adopt a proactive role in preventing conflict and tackle the root causes of conflicts. Those root causes include the climate crisis, structural discrimination and gender inequalities.

Militarization and the proliferation of illicit arms continues to escalate. The shrinking civic space and weakened rule of law exacerbate humanitarian crises and economic shocks. In those contexts, effective prevention requires an understanding of the gendered dynamics of the causes and consequences of conflicts.

Malta supports a holistic approach to prevention and peacebuilding — one in which security, sustainable development, human rights and gender equality are mutually reinforcing. Investing in people through quality education and lifelong learning and literacy skills can be transformative in building more peaceful, just, inclusive and sustainable societies. The empowerment of women and girls and gender equality must be central to conflict prevention approaches. A society cannot have peace without incorporating the well-being, inclusivity and protection of the fundamental human rights of women and young persons.

In line with the Secretary-General's recommendations in the New Agenda for Peace, we support concrete actions to ensure women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation at all stages and levels of peacebuilding and conflict prevention. By investing in gender-responsive constitutional, judicial, legislative and electoral reforms, we can help to overcome obstacles to women's participation and other structural gender inequalities. We further support the Agenda's call for developing national prevention strategies that provide predictable financing for women's peacebuilding organizations and give priority to sexual and gender-based violence prevention.

Malta consistently calls for a whole-of-system approach to bolster such peacebuilding efforts. We welcome the Peacebuilding Commission's role in cross-cutting areas, including on human rights, the women

and peace and security and the youth, peace and security agendas. When young persons are involved in peacebuilding efforts, peace processes are more durable. We also advocate for increased investment in youth-led peacebuilding and the institutionalization of youth participation in the Peacebuilding Commission. We support strengthening synergies among the Peacebuilding Commission, the Security Council and other United Nations bodies. We have opportunities to enhance that cooperation further in the Summit of the Future and the 2025 peacebuilding architecture review.

The Peacebuilding Commission is well placed, through their cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, to spot emerging threats and early warning signs, which they can convey to the Council. That enhanced coordination will better empower us with the ability to identify root causes of conflict and to empower communities with the tools to mitigate threats. We must also ensure that the Commission engages systemically with civil society, including women's rights organizations and young persons. That should be matched with a genuine commitment to ensuring peacebuilding activities are adequately supported and sustainably financed. In that context, we recall General Assembly resolution 76/305 on "Financing for peacebuilding", which recognizes the crucial need of sustained financing for peacebuilding efforts in an adequate and predictable manner.

In conclusion, these investments are especially critical in the context of mission withdrawals and transitions. Attention to women's protection and youth engagement with respect to staffing, financing, security and operational priorities must be given priority. The cost of conflict far outweighs investments in preventative measures and peacebuilding.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Flashing lights on the collars of the microphones will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after two and a half minutes.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Czechia.

Mr. Lipavský (Czechia): Let me thank the delegation of Japan for convening today's open debate on this important issue concerning the preservation of international peace and security, and I thank the briefers for their valuable insights.

Effective conflict prevention demands long-term commitment and cooperation from Governments and regional and international bodies. In order to address the root causes of tensions and strengthen the resilience of societies, we must link security, human rights and sustainable development priorities. We must also empower all voices in the global security discourse, including women and young people. Those groups are the most vulnerable in conflicts. Sadly, we have repeatedly seen that the Security Council continues to struggle to effectively prevent conflict in the world. Russia, a permanent member of the Council, with its devastating war against Ukraine, flagrantly violates the very purpose of the United Nations and its Security Council: the maintenance of peace. It also puts the credibility of the entire system of collective security enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations at risk. Czechia believes that a reformed and more representative Security Council might therefore be better equipped to address today's unprecedented multiple crises, including by making better use of the preventive tools already at its disposal.

We also consider it necessary to apply a broader approach through system-wide coordination across the United Nations. We encourage closer cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission in anticipating conflicts. Better use can be made of mechanisms of the human rights architecture in monitoring human rights violations. Especially when such violations are widespread and systematic, they can serve as an indicator of an increased risk of conflict.

We also support the emphasis on an increased focus on prevention at the national and regional levels, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his New Agenda for Peace. Nationally led prevention strategies are key to building and maintaining peace and security, as is the role of regional and subregional organizations, particularly in fostering trust and dialogue.

All political, peace and security endeavours must have strategies for fostering alliances with civil society and guaranteeing the complete, equitable and impactful engagement and leadership of women, alongside the inclusion of youth and marginalized communities. It is especially crucial to advocate for a secure and supportive atmosphere for female peacebuilders, human rights champions, activists, journalists and proponents of gender equality. On that note, I would like to add that Czechia calls on the Russian Federation to immediately release journalist Alsu Kurmasheva from prison.

I hope that this debate will help us to recommit to multilateralism and the founding principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Digital Government and Gender Equality of Denmark.

Ms. Bjerre (Denmark): I deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries — Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

We commend the delegation of Japan for its continued commitment to prioritizing prevention and putting peacebuilding on the agenda of the Security Council, and we thank the briefers for their insightful remarks.

Let me highlight three central points.

First, in order to address the root causes of conflicts and to sustain peace, gender equality is crucial. Protecting and promoting human rights for all is key to addressing inequalities, which drive conflict. We echo the Secretary-General's statement of 8 March that women's rights are a proven path to fair, peaceful, prosperous societies — it is good for us all. Women in all their diversity must have access to decision-making, and we must give particular attention to the participation of young women. Too often, young women are disproportionately excluded from decisions on issues that affect them. Practically, national institutions should remove barriers to and promote women's full, equal and meaningful participation in political and peacebuilding processes. They should foster access to justice for all and prevent violence against women, including sexual and gender-based violence. In line with the Secretary-General's recommendations in the New Agenda for Peace, we encourage the development of regional and national prevention strategies. Human rights must be at their core.

Secondly, we cannot overstate the importance of locally driven and community-based initiatives as part of infrastructures for peace. In that regard, the Council can do more to support the Secretary-General's good offices role and strengthen the role of gender advisers. The Council can also do more when it comes to making sure that peace operations are mandated, equipped and trained to foster meaningful partnerships with local communities and to include the perspectives of women, youth and local civil society. Furthermore, we need adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding, and the Peacebuilding Fund is among the essential mechanisms in that regard.

Thirdly, the United Nations system needs to expand its conflict prevention efforts and the mainstreaming of the women and peace and security agenda and the youth, peace and security agenda within those. Conflict prevention tools such as horizon-scanning, situational awareness briefings and early response should be more systematically used by the Council. And the analysis that underpins those tools must be gender- and age-responsive. In addition, the Council should strengthen its relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission by organizing joint briefings and requesting and making substantive use of the Commission's advice and recommendations.

We also encourage the Security Council to make the Secretary-General's upcoming third report on youth and peace and security the subject of an open debate.

The women and peace and security agenda is approaching its twenty-fifth anniversary, and the youth and peace and security agenda its tenth anniversary. We are also preparing for the 2025 review of the peacebuilding architecture, marking its twentieth anniversary. Important efforts have been taken, but we must do even more — together. We, the Nordic countries, are long-standing advocates for prioritizing prevention, promoting youth participation in peacebuilding and putting women front and centre.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development of Uganda.

Ms. Amongi (Uganda): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March, and I thank the Government of Japan for organizing this open debate on "Promoting conflict prevention — empowering all actors including women and youth" under the agenda item "Peacebuilding and sustaining peace". I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the delegation of Uganda.

Peace and security are fundamental and crucial in achieving sustainable development. We therefore need to reflect on the original purpose of the United Nations and work to resolve man-made conflicts and global insecurity through cooperation, diplomacy and peaceful means. In that regard, Uganda has continued to work with all regional partners to support and advance peace, stability and security initiatives in the region and beyond, so as to eliminate terrorism, mistrust and other conditions that breed conflict.

We remain actively engaged in regional initiatives, in particular those under the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the East African Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Our involvement is based on the fundamental values of multilateralism. As the international community, we must be steadfast in our resolve to support dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts whenever they occur around the world.

Peacebuilding, women and security and development are inextricably linked. Uganda remains committed to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, as enshrined in resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions. The Government of Uganda is currently implementing its third national action plan on women and peace and security for the period from 2021 to 2025. The national plan is one of the first high-impact plans in the world to address women and peace and security issues in relation to climate change, health outbreaks and pandemics. The overall goal of the action plan is to promote sustained peace and security through the meaningful participation of women in peace and development processes. The plan's outcome result areas include strengthening the institutional and coordination mechanism for women and peace and security agenda at all levels.

During the two-decade war waged by the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, we risked our lives as women to convince combatants and their sons and daughters to leave and to end the insurgency. Through a coalition on women and peace and security, the contribution made to the post-conflict transformation through the Women's National Task Force ensured that a gender-responsive peace, recovery and development plan was enacted, which has been crucial in rebuilding normalcy, ensuring peace and promoting development.

In conclusion, we wish to make the following recommendations.

The meaningful participation of women and young people is critical in every peacebuilding initiative. The active involvement of the community in a given country or region raises people's self-esteem, mobilizes their social energies and helps them to shape their own social and economic destiny. The voice of the youth — the biggest segment of our population — is very critical for sustainable peace. The Ugandan experience has demonstrated that ownership and control of the peacebuilding process requires not only a bottom-

up approach but also participation, control, a top-down managerial capacity and technical skills of organizational discipline in order for it to be sustained and for optimum use to be made of scarce resources.

There is a need to mainstream gender in early warning systems, peacebuilding and conflict-resolution processes and recovery and reconstruction programmes, including disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. There is also a need to implement interventions that enhance women's economic empowerment as a means for increasing their bargaining power in domestic settings and promoting self-reliance as a way of promoting peace in the home.

Finally, I want to state that Uganda is party to a number of regional and international instruments relevant to the women and peace and security agenda, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the African Union's Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region and its Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Gender Equality and Diversity of Luxembourg.

Ms. Backes (Luxembourg): I deliver this statement on behalf of the Benelux countries — the Kingdom of Belgium, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and my own country, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

We thank Japan for organizing this open debate, at a time when many women and young people from countries from all over the world are gathered here in New York for the Commission on the Status of Women.

Allow me to make three observations.

First, conflict prevention would highly benefit from a greater integration with the women and peace and security agenda. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all their diversity in decision-making is crucial for conflict-prevention strategies to be successful. Nearly 25 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), there is truly still an urgent need to step up our efforts to ensure that women have a seat at all tables — and to do so not only by taking initiatives to empower women and girls but also by removing all structural and systemic barriers

that prevent them from getting there. And conflict prevention can be successful only if we recognize the depth of the influence of gender norms, gender relations and gender inequalities. We need to integrate gender as a category of analysis and use women-led and women-informed strategies of early warning and conflict resolution.

Secondly, the importance of including youth in conflict prevention can hardly be overstated. It ensures legitimacy, local ownership and embeddedness. People and communities should be in the driver's seat in identifying their needs and solutions, and there is a clear link with the women and peace and security agenda. The equitable involvement of young women and young men is crucial to building a balanced and resilient society, and therefore contributes to preventing conflict.

The Benelux countries therefore welcome the inclusion of the youth, peace and security agenda in the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace. For an inclusive approach, it is also absolutely essential that the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda be strengthened through the meaningful participation of youth and youth-led organizations in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding. That also includes concrete measures to address existing financing gaps for youth-led initiatives.

Finally, more attention is needed on the devastating impact that violent conflict has on people's mental health and psychosocial well-being.

Thirdly, the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) should play a crucial role in supporting a country's comprehensive approach. The interaction between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission is instrumental in the pursuit of sustainable peace and security. In the light of the ongoing negotiations on the Pact for the Future, to be adopted during the Summit of the Future this September, the Benelux countries support a more robust role for the PBC and further strengthening of its advisory function to the Security Council. We fully agree that United Nations peacebuilding and a focus on prevention should be strengthened. Both the Summit of the Future and the 2025 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture will provide us with opportunities to strengthen and update our toolbox for conflict prevention.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Internal Affairs of Tonga.

Lord Vaea (Tonga): I wish to congratulate Japan on taking up the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. I acknowledge the briefers, including Ms. Bhagwan Rolls from the Pacific region.

I am pleased to address the Security Council on the importance of preventing conflict and its recurrence, thereby realizing a world in which the human dignity of every individual is upheld and no one is left behind, specifically within the context of the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, currently under way. Our statement is in line with that to be delivered by the representative of Fiji on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Multiple conflicts are indeed further exacerbated by risk multipliers such as climate change, which the leaders of Tonga and other Pacific countries have declared as the single-greatest threat to the security of our peoples. Global inflation, as a negative spillover effect of those conflicts, has weakened our already vulnerable small, open economy and further widened the gender wage gap.

But to avoid conflicts occurring in the first place, we ought to put certain mechanisms in place that support us in maintaining peace and security. Speaking of which, through the adoption by Pacific leaders of the Boe Declaration in 2018 and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, the Pacific reaffirms its commitment to promoting peace and security. Those documents were premised upon good governance and respect for Indigenous rights and cultural values. In this process, it is critical that we continue the dialogue by including all sectors of the community, such as women and girls, faith-based organizations and persons with disabilities.

Tonga's national women's empowerment and gender policy, as well as the Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights, supports those aims through the creation of an enabling environment for mainstreaming gender across Government policies, programmes and services. We further endeavour to do so in the area of the climate crisis, in which women and children are often the most vulnerable and prone to being hit the hardest. We therefore call for urgent action while we still have the opportunity to react to this most imminent peril. Accordingly, we emphasize the need for the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General on climate and security and the deployment of dedicated staff, such as climate security advisers.

We appreciate the opportunity afforded in today's open debate to highlight challenges we face, which we think will help the Security Council in its vital role of preventing conflict and its recurrence.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare of Namibia.

Ms. Sioka (Namibia): Allow me to congratulate Japan on presiding over the Security Council this month. I equally wish to thank you, Mr. President, for the timing of today's open debate, which coincides with this year's session on the Commission on the Status of Women, the largest annual United Nations gathering on women's empowerment and gender equality.

Today's open debate takes place against the backdrop of a world that is in turmoil — a world that struggles with the challenges of a development agenda that is off track, a world in which wars are raging and a world in which the face of hunger and poverty is predominantly characterized by women and girls, with most of them being youth.

In striving to do better for the women of the world, we must genuinely be committed to promoting conflict prevention and working towards durable and lasting peace, because peace is the foundation upon which development is built. Without an environment that supports peace and development, our agenda for the empowerment of women will be neglected. We are all aware that we are significantly behind in our quest to achieve the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all spheres of life.

The Security Council has an instrumental role to play and should collaborate with the Peacebuilding Commission and other components of the peacebuilding architecture, including regional and subregional organizations, to support peacebuilding and enforcement. Only when we work together towards a common objective of creating an environment that is conducive for peace to thrive and be sustained can we see tangible progress on the development agenda, including the commitment to accelerating the empowerment of women.

Namibia stands firm in promoting conflict prevention through our implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and has continued to build on that, not only in our own context, but in rendering our support to strengthening the prevention

and peacebuilding agenda. We continue in that endeavour in our current role on the African Union Peace and Security Council, which we consider to be one of the humble contributions we make to the maintenance of international peace and security. Our commitment is anchored in the knowledge that along the path of peace lies the route towards development. Before we can achieve meaningful development for girls and women everywhere, we must advocate for peace everywhere.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Women of Panama.

Ms. Herrera Araúz (Panama) (spoke in Spanish): Twenty-three years ago, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed that conflict prevention must be made the cornerstone of collective security system of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. The current political context is characterized by increasingly frequent, complex and protracted conflicts, threatening the lives of countless people and undermining human security. It disproportionately affects women and young people who, beyond their underrepresentation, play an essential role in defending their rights and interests.

The unanimous adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) reaffirmed the critical role of women in conflict prevention, mediation and resolution. Yet women continue to be systematically excluded from political leadership and peace processes, despite evidence that we are a critical link in efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts effectively. Furthermore, resolution 2250 (2015) recognized for the first time the important role that young people can play in conflict prevention and resolution and as crucial actors in the success and sustainability of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. Nevertheless, they also continue to be excluded from decision-making and policymaking processes.

It is widely known that women make up 50 per cent of the world's population and that we now have the largest number of young people in human history. It is imperative to ensure that all can fully exercise their rights, take part in decision-making and contribute to reforms of laws and public institutions in their respective societies. Incorporating the diverse perceptions, experiences and capacities of women, together with the critical and innovative vision of young people and their willingness to actively contribute to the solution of major global challenges, are powerful instruments for change. Their inclusion in peace efforts is not only

a moral imperative, but also an effective strategy to address the root causes of conflict and promote stability and social cohesion.

We are at a crucial point where conflict prevention is not just an aspiration, but an urgent necessity. In a world where challenges are intertwined, the focus on the nexus between humanitarian action, peace and development is more relevant than ever to coherently address the vulnerabilities that people face before, during and after crises.

In that context, strengthening multilateralism and stronger international cooperation is essential. Increased support by international financial institutions to Member States affected by conflict and violence is essential not only to address crises and their immediate consequences, but also to promote long-term sustainable development by prioritizing investment in peace.

Current developments in the international arena serve as clear testimony to the need to strengthen the efficiency and operability of the Security Council so that it can fulfil its responsibility and mandate to safeguard international peace and security, as well as addressing emerging risks that have traditionally been considered the competence of other organs.

In the same vein, in the understanding that without peace there can be no sustainable development, the Security Council could benefit from the perspectives and results of the Summit of the Future, as well as from the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum. The New Agenda for Peace calls for a multidimensional approach to conflict prevention, building stronger collective security and prioritizing diplomatic mechanisms for dispute resolution.

The Charter of the United Nations sets out fundamental principles that must be preserved in an ever-changing world. Gender equality and youth participation are essential catalysts for maintaining the integrity of the principles set out therein, thereby promoting a more just and equitable world.

For Panama, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women has become a basic pillar of our foreign policy and sustainable human development. We recognize that equality, development and peace can be achieved only if women and young people participate fully at all levels of society. There is no lasting peace without their participation. As a candidate for a term as a non-permanent member

of the Security Council for the period 2025 to 2026, our nation pledges to be a strong ally to women and youth within this multilateral forum and to continue to support the implementation of initiatives to expand the voices, leadership and participation of women and youth in the peace and security agenda. Panama reiterates its firm belief in the transformative potential of women and youth with regard to the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security, as well as in the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We will continue to work to give women and youth a voice and a leading role in peacebuilding and sustainable development.

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

Ms. Taylor Jay (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): One of the main challenges faced by young people is the lack of skills training to enable their effective and meaningful participation in prevention. The youth, peace and security agenda, to which Colombia is committed, is fundamental in promoting an intergenerational and long-term approach that contributes to the prevention of divisive political conflicts and the resurgence of violence.

Placing special focus on its territories, Colombia is one of the three countries that, together with the United Nations Youth Office, organized the High-level Global Conference on Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes, leading to the launch of its five-year strategic action plan in 2022. That document envisages the implementation of initiatives to strengthen youth capacities in conflict prevention, mediation, negotiation and other technical and thematic capacities for more meaningful participation.

My country's experience with the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace has given us a number of elements that I would like to highlight.

Ours was the first agreement in the world to include a gender approach. An inclusive approach must also aim to empower and amplify the voice of women in all their diversity, enabling them to serve as agents of change and to bolster conflict prevention.

Likewise, the participatory development of the national action plan on the women and peace and security agenda has allowed us to substantiate the fact that integrating women's and feminist networks,

movements and organizations and providing them with spaces that make their actions visible at the local and regional levels help the actors to take ownership of the initiatives and contribute to establishing a “total peace” that is genuinely sustainable and lasting.

We now know that, if we aspire to prevent new violence, we must act decisively to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of ex-combatants, their families and their environments. Any reintegration strategy must comprehensively consider the differentiated roles that women and youth have played in armed conflicts and offer real opportunities for reintegration into civilian life in the social, economic and political spheres, according to their preferences and life plans.

Our experience in the quest for peace and the ceaseless reality of armed conflicts in the rest of the world demonstrate time and again that young people and women have been key actors in war, whether as victims of war or because they have become involved as a result of their social contexts and decisions. In that regard, they should also be considered key actors in peacebuilding.

Colombia prioritizes the challenge of translating those actions into concrete strategies that take into account and address the specificities of each territory, in order to have a real impact on the lives of all people.

We are certain that women, in all their diversity, and young people are an integral part of conflict prevention. It is through their strength and their voices that we will be able to build a socially anchored peace and avoid the cycles of violence that we have institutionalized and that endanger ways of life and dignity.

Seven decades of conflict have shown us that society is the largest and most valuable repository of practices and knowledge for building and consolidating peace. Hence the need for regular and efficient mechanisms for consultation with those actors. Only through a participatory and inclusive dialogue will it be possible to identify and positively transform the root causes of violence in order to disrupt the models and patterns of hatred, dispossession and death.

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

Ms. Kefala (Greece): It is with great pleasure that I participate in today’s open debate on promoting conflict prevention and empowering all actors, including

women and youth. Therefore, I would like to warmly thank the Japanese presidency of the Security Council for organizing this event, and our speakers for their thorough briefings.

While I fully align myself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union, please allow me to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Achieving sustainable and long-lasting peace is not only about ending conflict. It entails, first and foremost, a positive and inclusive notion of peace, intrinsically linked to social justice, able to offer its beneficial effects to each and every person without discrimination on any grounds, so that no one is left behind. That comprehensive approach to conflict prevention aims to enhance the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. It therefore calls for full and meaningful gender-equal participation, as a cross-cutting parameter integrated across all actions, from early-warning mechanisms to efforts to address the root causes of conflict and empower all members of society, especially the most vulnerable ones.

In that vein, I could not agree more with the Secretary-General’s recommendation to Member States regarding the need to develop national prevention strategies. Conflict prevention, as an integral part of a robust national action plan to implement the women and peace and security and the youth, peace and security agendas, gives voice to women and youth, in all their diversity, making the whole process more inclusive and democratic. It therefore guarantees national ownership of peacebuilding efforts.

Greece is committed to contributing to a more resilient, gender-equal and gender-inclusive world by focusing efforts on comprehensive conflict prevention towards sustainable peace for all. The national action plan on women, peace and security is a strong deliverable by the Greek Government to that end. Moreover, Greece prioritizes a prominent role for women and youth as agents of change in peace efforts, within the framework of its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the 2025 to 2026 term. Therefore, if elected, my country will aim to mainstream the Security Council’s women and peace and security and youth, peace and security agendas throughout the work of the Security Council, thereby contributing substantially to sustainable peace, security and development for all.

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

Ms. Totladze (Georgia): I would like to extend our gratitude to the presidency of Japan for convening today's important debate.

Georgia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union (EU), and I would like to make comments in my national capacity.

Let me underline the vital role of the Security Council in upholding international peace and security, a role mandated by the Charter of the United Nations. The relevant Security Council resolutions are important tools for advancing the gender equality and youth agendas in conflict and post-conflict situations. We believe in the value of implementing the women and peace and security and youth, peace and security agendas by increasing the equal and meaningful participation of women and youth at all stages of peace processes. Nevertheless, regrettably, the opportunities of women and youth to engage in and influence peace negotiations remain limited. We share the concern expressed in the Secretary-General's most recent report on women and peace and security (S/2023/725) about the reduced political space for women's participation in peace and security decision-making in a number of countries.

At the national level, the Government of Georgia is carrying out several activities to promote the meaningful participation of women and youth, such as regular dialogue with conflict-affected women and youth and with civil society representatives working on women's rights. We are making every effort to ensure that the needs and priorities of internally displaced women and conflict-affected women are integrated into planning for the peace process and raised in the negotiation formats, particularly in the Geneva International Discussions and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism. We are also continuing efforts to advance the role of youth in all spheres of public life and democratic processes. That objective is envisaged by the Georgian national youth policy concept for 2020 to 2030.

Despite those endeavours, Russia's ongoing occupation and effective control of the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia, which was legally attested to by the landmark 2021 judgment of the European Court of Human Rights of 2021, hampers the

peace process and prevents us from sharing the human rights protection framework with the women and youth who remain on the other side of the occupation line. People living in those regions have to endure blatant violations of their rights on a daily basis. Such violations include, but are not limited to, discrimination on ethnic grounds; infringement of the rights to life, health and property; deprivation of liberty; arbitrary detentions and kidnappings; restrictions on the freedom of movement; and the prohibition of education in the native language.

The dangerous recent trend of deliberate targeting of female Georgian citizens entails a strong gender dimension. Its aim is to pressure, scare and humiliate the most vulnerable component of the ethnic Georgian population in the occupied regions, a group that is already the target of constant discrimination. Given the gravity of the situation on the ground, it is of the utmost importance that international and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms be allowed into those regions. We once again urge Russia to fulfil its international obligations, comply with the EU-mandated 2008 ceasefire agreement and withdraw its military forces from the entire territory of Georgia.

In conclusion, I wish to stress that Georgia remains committed to promoting the women and peace and security and youth, peace and security agendas at the national and international levels.

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

Ms. Nadakuitavuki (Fiji): I too would like to congratulate Japan on its presidency this month and on convening this meeting. I also wish to acknowledge our very own Sharon Bhagwan Rolls for being here and representing a civil society organization.

I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the members of the Pacific Islands Forum with a presence at the United Nations, namely, Australia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Fiji. We acknowledge the guidance and support of the Cook Islands as Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum.

The Blue Pacific continent has a proud history of supporting peace and security for all Pacific peoples. Through the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific

Continent, the Pacific Islands Forum leaders affirmed their vision for a resilient region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity.

To achieve their vision for the future, Pacific Islands Forum leaders have identified peace and security as a priority guided by the Boe Declaration on Regional Security, coupled with the Biketawa Declaration and their Action Plans, which clearly define and articulate the most pressing security concerns for our Blue Pacific continent.

Of all those concerns, the Pacific leaders have articulated that climate change, inclusive of the adverse impacts of sea level rise, is the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of all Pacific peoples.

In addition to sea level rise and other adverse impacts of climate change, the Pacific faces other significant security challenges — environmental and resource security, cybersecurity, transnational organized crime and human security, including gender-based violence.

And while the Pacific region is largely peaceful, it has also felt the impacts of conflict. During these times of conflict, the Pacific Island nations have banded together to support each other. We did so in the Solomon Islands from 2003 to 2017, through the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands; in Nauru from 2004 to 2009, through the Pacific Regional Assistance to Nauru; and most recently, during the coronavirus disease pandemic (COVID-19), by establishing the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19.

Pacific Islands Forum members established these regional responses under the Biketawa Declaration — a regional framework and an important collaborative tool for the maintenance of regional peace and security. The Biketawa Declaration promotes good governance, democratic processes and institutions, respect for indigenous rights and cultural values and the importance of averting the causes of conflict and of reducing, containing and resolving all conflicts by peaceful means, including customary practices.

We welcome the support from the United Nations, including the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Fund, which promote those important values and help us to better understand and mitigate the biggest security challenges, as defined by Pacific Island countries themselves.

The Peacebuilding Fund's recent support for the development of the Pacific Climate Security Assessment guide was very welcome, and we encourage the Council and the Peacebuilding Fund to maintain an open and flexible approach to supporting home-grown peacebuilding approaches in the Pacific.

The Pacific Islands Forum also recognizes that building and maintaining peace and preventing conflict requires the ongoing involvement of all segments of the community, including civil society, faith-based organizations and the full, effective and meaningful participation of women and girls, persons with disabilities, youth and other marginalized groups.

In 2023, the Pacific Islands Forum leaders revitalized their 2012 Gender Equality Declaration, which includes reaffirming their commitment to ensuring the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation of women and girls in all their diversity at every stage of peace processes, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding for peace and security.

We know from experience the important role women and girls continue to play in maintaining peace and security in the Blue Pacific continent. The Pacific Islands Forum is committed to inclusivity and equity and recognizes that inclusive dialogue is crucial to sustainable conflict prevention and building and maintaining regional and global peace and security.

We would like to see the Council and the Peacebuilding Fund continue to prioritize inclusive dialogue as a fundamental part of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In looking ahead, as we focus on the Summit of the Future, the climate, peace and security agenda remains relevant to our region. Our leaders want to see the Pacific as a zone of peace. In that connection, we call for the appointment of a special representative for climate, peace and security.

The President: There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.05 p.m.