



# Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

**8451**<sup>st</sup> meeting

Friday, 25 January 2019, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Vargas Maldonado/Mr. Cortorreal . . . . . (Dominican Republic)

*Members:*

Belgium . . . . .	Mr. Reynders
China . . . . .	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
Côte d'Ivoire . . . . .	Mr. Ipo
Equatorial Guinea . . . . .	Mr. Ndong Mba
France . . . . .	Mrs. Gueguen
Germany . . . . .	Mr. Maas
Indonesia . . . . .	Mrs. Marsudi
Kuwait . . . . .	Sheikh Al Sabah
Peru . . . . .	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland . . . . .	Mr. Kurtyka
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
South Africa . . . . .	Mr. Matjila
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Lord Ahmad
United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Cohen

## Agenda

### Maintenance of international peace and security

Addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security

Letter dated 2 January 2019 from the Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/1)

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

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Maintenance of international peace and security**

#### **Addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security**

#### **Letter dated 2 January 2019 from the Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/1)**

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, India, Iraq, Ireland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Maldives, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Morocco, Nauru, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Qatar, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Somalia, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Tuvalu, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme; Mr. Pavel Kabat, Chief Scientist of the World Meteorological Organization; and Ms. Lindsay Getschel, Research Assistant at the Environmental Security Program of the Stimson Center.

Mr. Steiner is joining today's meeting via video tele-conference from Davos, Switzerland.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite Mr. Antonio Parenti, Minister Counsellor of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; Her Excellency Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations; and Mr. Robert

Mardini, Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

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

*It is so decided.*

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

I wish to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/2019/1, which contains a letter dated 2 January 2019 from the Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

**Ms. DiCarlo:** I thank the Government of the Dominican Republic for convening this timely open debate.

The risks associated with climate-related disasters do not represent a scenario of some distant future. They are already a reality for millions of people around the globe, and they are not going away. A report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change last October predicted more heat waves, heavier rain events, higher sea levels and more severe damage to agriculture. These trends represent a security risk for the entire world. However, their consequences are felt most strongly in regions that are already vulnerable, where climate change and extreme weather compound existing grievances and threats.

The relationship between climate-related risks and conflict is complex and often intersects with political, social, economic and demographic factors. Sea-level rise is an obvious primary impact of climate change, and one that ultimately threatens the very existence of coastal communities and small island States. Extreme weather is another such consequence. In the space of a month, hurricanes Irma, Harvey and Maria displaced around 3 million people along the Atlantic Coast of the Americas and the Caribbean. The worst impact was felt by small island developing States of the region. In Haiti, for example, a series of climate-related disasters has struck the country since the devastating earthquake in

2010 and has contributed to instability and a prolonged humanitarian crisis.

Climate change also affects peace and security in indirect but no less serious ways. In the Sahel and the Sudan, for instance, climate change has heightened competition for diminishing land, forage and water resources, fuelling tensions between herders and farmers. In the Lake Chad basin, climate change contributes to unpredictable rainfall patterns that impede traditional livelihood options, compound socioeconomic exclusion and reduce the opportunity costs of joining armed groups.

Climate-related displacement has also become an acute problem. Frequent and longer droughts in Somalia have been a major factor in the displacement of more than 2.6 million people, which in turn has increased local tensions, as well as human trafficking, child exploitation and recruitment by armed groups.

For the Security Council, this is not news. In recent months, the Council has recognized the adverse effects of climate change, among other factors, on the stability of Mali, Somalia, West Africa and the Sahel, Central Africa and the Sudan. The Secretary-General, for his part, has articulated a broad vision for prevention and made it a priority to improve our ability to address wider stresses and shocks that can exacerbate crises and lead to violent conflict. Across the United Nations system, efforts are intensifying to leverage capacities and sharpen responses. For example, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel has been working closely with the Economic Community of West African States to analyse climate-related security risks in the region and to jointly develop regional prevention strategies.

These regional approaches are also being applied in Central Asia, where regional cooperation is fostering progress in the area of transboundary water management through ongoing consultations among Central Asian States, supported by the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy. In country-specific contexts, our missions are also building responses to the consequences of climate change. In Somalia, the United Nations is working to establish an effective drought response programme.

Looking ahead, the United Nations will invest in a number of actions.

First, we are strengthening our analytical capacity. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme, in collaboration with practitioners from across and beyond the United Nations, are developing an integrated risk assessment framework to analyse climate-related security risks. Furthermore, in response to Security Council presidential statement S/PRST/2011/15, which requested more contextual information on the security implications of climate change, the United Nations is working to ensure that such analysis is better reflected in our mandated reports.

Secondly, the United Nations is seeking to strengthen the evidence base to support the development of climate risk prevention and management strategies at the field level. We invite Member States and other interested actors to jointly undertake a review of good practices that will inform this work.

Thirdly, we are strengthening partnerships to leverage existing capacities with Member States, regional organizations, civil society and the growing research community on this issue. Addressing the security implications of climate change is a collective problem that requires a collective response.

Most important for all of us is the recognition that deeds must follow words. Major armies and businesses have long recognized the need to prepare for climate-related risks, rightfully perceiving climate change as a threat multiplier. We cannot lag behind. We must act now, with a sense of urgency and a commitment to placing people, especially those most marginalized and vulnerable, at the centre of our efforts. Given the critical role and responsibility of the Security Council, I am encouraged by today's debate. It signals our willingness to establish a shared understanding of the impact of climate-related security risks on international peace and security. In this regard, I would like to again thank the Dominican Republic for convening us on this subject.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Steiner.

**Mr. Steiner**: I begin by offering my apologies for the fact that, due to technology issues, it has not been possible to establish a video connection. I shall therefore restrict my statement to a brief overview of the main

points that I wanted to share with the Security Council and will submit the full statement in due course.

If I may, I would like to begin by thanking the Dominican Republic and you, Mr. President, in your capacity as its Foreign Minister, for calling the Council's attention once again to the impact of climate-related disasters on international peace and security in this debate. I also want to join my colleague Rosemary DiCarlo and our other briefers in expressing the hope that what we share with the Council today will not only demonstrate the linkages that the Council is exploring but also bring to its attention once again the sense of urgency with which the world now needs to address this issue.

Taken alone, climate-related disasters, conflict and insecurity each threaten human security and development. Examples will be forthcoming today. But their convergence can lead to catastrophic impacts on people and societies. It is telling that this week the World Economic Forum published its *Global Risks Report 2018*, in which it identifies the impact of extreme weather events and failure to implement climate-change mitigation and adaptation measures as the top two global risks that the world now faces, well ahead of cybersecurity, data theft and other such phenomena that pose risks to the global economy and international security.

As Council members all know, climate change is a risk multiplier. It aggravates an already fragile situation, including in countries in conflict, where communities have limited capacities to cope with additional shocks. In a recent report, our colleagues in the World Bank have also pointed to the fact that without urgent climate action, more than 140 million people in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America will migrate within their countries' borders by the year 2050, adding significantly to the challenges that are already being faced by vulnerable communities in cities.

In our work on the ground as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), we are witness to the ways that climate change is driving insecurity and, increasingly, conflict as well. For instance, in extreme weather events such as drought, we are already witnessing a higher number of victims arising from conflict between pastoralists and sedentary populations in West Africa than from some of the extreme violence related to political developments. These are very troubling developments and point to the fact that we are

not keeping up with the challenge. Let me very briefly set out three major themes that have emerged.

First, the science that my colleague Rosemary DiCarlo just referred to is becoming ever more clear, both in terms of the nature and scale of the impact and to the linkages between climate change and the effect that it is having not just in the atmosphere, but actually in the biosphere. The report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change points to more extreme weather events, drought, floods, rising sea levels and so on, and those clearly are a threat to communities across the globe, in particular and perhaps on the front line of action to the poorest of the poor and coastal communities in small island developing States.

But what is also important is the fact that the empirical evidence of how we can respond to those threats is becoming ever more clear. The nationally determined contributions that all countries agreed to in Paris are not only action plans but also risk maps of where countries have identified the priorities for addressing threats to the future of their security, economic well-being and development. The case of Iraq is an interesting one. The action plan that Iraq brought to the Paris agreement focuses on the nexus between climate and security, which includes mainstreaming climate risks, ecosystem restoration and solar solutions for recovery in newly liberated areas.

The second major point I wish to make is that our capacity to respond to these threats and address their challenges to human security demands an effective and integrated agenda on climate disaster-risk reduction, peacebuilding and many development measures, including the resetting of our economies and therefore emissions reduction. Integrating efforts to tackle climate change and to prepare for and respond to natural disasters is the right approach. The Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provide us with an approach that can actually leverage various measures that can add up to significant change. Included in that are the optimization of nature-based solutions to scale. Sustainable land use and forest management offer powerful and cost-effective means to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce risks to livelihoods and provide rural economies in particular with opportunities to manage this.

The third point that I would like to make here is that while we are addressing the first two issues, it is critical that we recognize that people are already at risk

today from the impact of climate change. Therefore, investing in adaptation and resilience is now an urgent need if we wish to scale up. Even if we curb emissions for 1.5 degree world, many millions of people are already exposed to the challenges and risks of climate change. A strong focus on adaptation and disaster risk management is therefore essential. I would cite two or three examples from our work across the world that demonstrate how we are currently trying to assist countries in addressing this. I would also mention that at the UNDP today, we literally have a portfolio of hundreds of projects in 140 countries, assisting nations to address these mitigation and adaptation priorities.

In Maldives, rising sea levels threaten freshwater supplies. The Government of Maldives and UNDP have piloted an innovative integrated water management system across three islands. I am pleased report that, based on the success of the pilot, the United Nations Green Climate Fund is now providing financing to scale up such an integrated water management system across 45 islands, securing a combination of rainwater and groundwater for a quarter of the population in Maldives.

My second example is in the Caribbean. For obvious reasons, in partnership with four of the largest insurance companies in the region, UNDP has supported Governments in designing initiatives to facilitate financial risk transfers from climate-vulnerable households to the private sector. This initiative will expand insurance coverage in the Caribbean, building on the reconstruction work in the region.

As a final example, in the Dominican Republic, the Government, in partnership with UNDP, has developed a vulnerability index to climate shock — the first of its kind worldwide — to measure household vulnerability to hurricanes, storms and other climate phenomena. It has been used not only in the context of social protection policy systems, but also as a tool for disaster risk planning and disaster response. It is a very appropriate example at this time, given that the Dominican Republic, as President of the Security Council, has brought us together on this critical question today.

I end this brief presentation by appealing to all participants to consider how the world now views climate risk and how the world is assessing the threat that it poses to the future not only of our economies but also of our human and national security. Ultimately, it

also becomes a transboundary challenge to the way that we can look to the future.

I express my thanks for this opportunity to address the Council by means of this telephone call, and, again, my apologies for not having been able to participate in person.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Steiner for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kabat.

**Mr. Kabat**: I have the honour to brief the Council today on behalf of the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations system's authoritative voice on weather, climate and water. The WMO has 192 member States and territories, with representatives of national meteorological and hydrological services around the world.

As already pointed out by my colleague Achim Steiner, the World Economic Forum, which is taking place in Davos this week, has just published its annual *Global Risks Report 2019*. The report indicates once again that extreme weather, natural disasters, climate change and water crises are the top four issues on the list of existential threats of the global risk landscape. These show significant interconnections with the other shocks and impacts to peace and security and sustainable development.

This survey highlights yet again the critical importance of the WMO's core business, and early warnings are at the heart of that business: early warnings to prevent natural hazards from becoming disasters, and early warnings about our changing climate, which were issued a full 40 years ago, at the First World Climate Conference, organized by the WMO in 1979.

Global average greenhouse-gas concentrations of carbon dioxide reached 405 parts per million in 2017 and are continuing to rise to record levels in 2018-2019. The last time our Earth experienced a comparable concentration of carbon dioxide was 3 to 5 million years ago, when the temperature was about 2 to 3 degrees warmer and the sea level was 10 to 20 metres higher than it is now. The WMO's provisional statement on the state of the climate in 2018 showed that the past four years have been the warmest on record, with many high-impact weather events that bear the hallmarks of climate change. The 20 warmest years on record have occurred in the past 22 years. The global average

temperature is nearly 1 degree higher than it was in the pre-industrial era.

On extreme weather threats, 2017 was the most impactful and costliest Atlantic hurricane season in observable history, with losses exceeding \$282 billion and significant social economic and gross domestic product (GDP) impacts on small island developing States in the Caribbean from major hurricanes such as Maria, Irma and Harvey. The World Bank estimates the total damage and losses to Dominica island from Hurricane Maria at \$1.3 billion, or 224 per cent of its GDP. Approximately 99.7 per cent of the damage done during the season was due to three of the season's major hurricanes — Harvey, Irma, and Maria. Another notable hurricane, Nate, was the worst natural disaster in Costa Rican history. That season was also one of only six years on record to feature multiple Category 5 hurricanes.

In August 2018, the south-western Indian state of Kerala suffered the worst flooding since the 1920s, displacing more than 1.4 million people from their homes and affecting more than 5.4 million. Large parts of western Japan experienced destructive flooding in late June and early July, killing at least 230 people and destroying thousands of homes. Flooding affected many parts of East Africa in March and April, including Kenya and Somalia, which had previously been suffering from severe drought, as well as Ethiopia and northern and central Tanzania. Of the 17.7 million internally displaced persons tracked by the International Organization for Migration, 2.3 million had been displaced due to disasters linked to weather and climate events as of September 2018. In Somalia, some 642,000 new internal displacements were recorded between January and July 2018 by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with flooding the primary reason for displacement, followed by drought and conflict.

Research by the WMO and its partners and network of scientists shows that sea-level rise is accelerating, as is the melting of polar ice sheets, posing an increasing existential threat to small island developing States. The shrinking of Arctic sea ice not only affects the local environment and indigenous peoples, but also influences weather patterns in the world's populated regions. Glacier melt continues unchecked, with short-term impacts that include increased flooding and a long-term threat to water supplies for many millions of people. Ocean heat content is also at record levels,

with far-reaching, lasting consequences for marine life, coral reefs and food security.

Climate change has a multitude of security impacts: rolling back the gains made in nutrition and access to food; heightening the risk of wildfires and exacerbating air-quality challenges; and increasing the potential for water conflict, leading to more internal displacement and migration. It is therefore increasingly regarded as a national security threat.

Today is the first time in history that the WMO, as a United Nations agency, has officially briefed the Security Council in the Chamber on climate and extreme weather issues. We hope that this will foster closer collaboration and establish mechanisms for future briefings between Security Council members and the United Nations system agencies, including the WMO, which will make it possible to provide authoritative information for decision-making and support the diplomatic business of the Council in areas appropriate to the understanding and analysis of peace and security threats.

The WMO is stepping up its support for the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre through a dedicated coordination officer at United Nations Headquarters to provide expert information and to assist United Nations leadership in making informed strategic decisions. This is vital given that extreme weather and climate events such as floods, drought and tropical cyclones are undercutting progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, as we are repeatedly seeing, with tragic consequences.

The WMO is committed to providing cutting-edge science to the United Nations Secretary-General's Climate Summit in September and to supporting Member States in evidence-based climate action. In order to meet the challenges and promote the international agenda, there is a need for a new political and investment paradigm to build a new generation of hydroclimate forecasting and early-warning services. This should become a component of the basic infrastructure of a country, comparable to roads and bridges. We must see this is a must-have, not just something nice to have.

The WMO is honoured to support Member States and the Security Council in the provision of top-quality information on weather-, climate-, water- and environment-related threats to peace and security. We thank once again the Dominican Republic presidency

of the Security Council for its vision in organizing this debate and for the opportunity to address the Council in the Chamber this morning.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Kabat for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Getschel.

**Ms. Getschel**: It is an honour to address the Security Council, and I thank the Dominican Republic for having convened this debate.

I am here as a young person to demand action because it is my generation and those that come after me who will bear the consequences of climate change. We are dedicated to finding solutions to this issue so that we can live in a world that is more secure, more peaceful and more prosperous.

I will lay out three concrete steps that the Security Council can take to reduce the security impacts of climate change.

First, the Security Council should adopt a draft resolution that formally recognizes climate change as a threat to international peace and security.

Secondly, deployed United Nations missions should assess how climate change will impact local youth and how youth can be involved in building resilience and sustainability.

And, thirdly, deployed United Nations missions need to transition to using clean energy in the field, which will help mitigate climate change as well as build more sustainable communities.

The adoption by the Security Council of a draft resolution formally recognizing the threat that climate change poses to security is long overdue. While I applaud the Council for discussing climate change's security impacts, it has been 10 years since its first debate on this issue, and no resolution has been adopted that affirms that climate change constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

There is no question that climate change is a security issue. At the Stimson Center, an international security policy research institute in Washington, D.C., where I work, we are doing innovative research on how social and economic vulnerabilities, poor governance, migration and a decline in fisheries will impact the stability of coastal cities. By overlaying these factors, we are identifying the most at-risk places for instability

as a result of climate change in order to better target policies, investment and aid.

It is clear to everyone in this room that climate change is a security threat. Today, we know that 18 million people were displaced in 2017 alone as a result of storms, drought, flooding and heat waves. As we have seen in just the past few Atlantic hurricane seasons, which have ravaged the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, local Governments simply cannot handle the increasingly severe weather that is becoming more common. When local Governments cannot provide basic services to their people, the result is displacement, poverty, political instability and violence. Climate change is also harming the food and economic security of millions of people. There is an increasing consensus that more extreme and longer droughts in Africa and the Middle East are connected to conflict there. As oceans warm and marine ecosystems shift, coastal communities, particularly in island nations, will lose the sources of food and livelihood they have relied on for generations.

Simply put, climate change makes people less safe, forcing them to leave their homes and abandon their livelihoods as they lose access to their income, food and ways of life. This clearly impacts political and social stability. Importantly, young people are particularly vulnerable, be it through human trafficking, unemployment, poverty or simply not knowing where their next meal is coming from.

While the United Nations has incorporated climate change into the mandates of missions, such as in Somalia, Darfur, Mali, the Central African Republic and the Lake Chad region, a Security Council resolution that recognizes the security impacts of climate change must also require climate sensitivity to be part of the mandates of all peacekeeping missions and special political missions.

The next step the Security Council must take will be to recognize both the disproportionate impact climate change has on young people and young people's unique role as innovators, bringing new ideas to the table to solve this global problem. The Security Council should require the special representatives of the Secretary-General at each deployed mission to assess the impact of climate change on local youth, particularly in terms of displacement, unemployment, food security, and recruitment into armed groups, because these are insecurities that we know drive continued conflict.

The special representatives should brief the Security Council on their findings. Such assessments would function as an early-warning mechanism to alert the Council to areas where climate change will hamper the ability of United Nations missions to carry out their conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities.

Deployed missions must also engage young people in finding solutions to build climate resilience in their communities. As just one example, in Saint Lucia, a local young person, Mr. Johanan Dujon saw how climate-induced blooms of harmful seaweed damaged the local fishing industry and he created a fertilizer using the seaweed that had washed ashore. This improved the resilience of local fishers to climate change and improved local gardening and agriculture. In the three years since Mr. Dujon started his business, he has removed almost 300 tons of seaweed from the shores of Saint Lucia. More of these innovative solutions are needed to address climate change around the world. The United Nations and its newly launched Youth 2030 Strategy can act as a platform where young people can share their ideas and find support for their initiatives.

Finally, the United Nations must live up to this organ's long-stated goal to reduce reliance on fossil fuels in field missions. By reducing the energy footprint of its deployed missions, the United Nations can reduce its greenhouse gas pollution while also building sustainable infrastructure in the communities that it serves. By using sustainable energy, the United Nations can prevent its reliance on the fossil fuels market and build a more self-sufficient community. According to an environmental study conducted by the United Nations Department of Field Support, as of April 2017, renewable energy accounted for less than 1 per cent of electricity generation in deployed missions, meaning that missions rely almost entirely on fossil fuels, particularly diesel. The Security Council should adopt a resolution to commit to 50 per cent of energy from renewables by 2025 and use regular reports from the Secretary-General to track progress.

There is no question that climate change is a security threat both in its direct impacts and as a threat multiplier. The United Nations and the Security Council must live up to their words and act now to mitigate and adapt to climate change. While I am heartened by multilateral frameworks like the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, there is much more to be done. Those commitments are important, but they are not nearly good enough if we are to prevent warming above 1.5°C.

Young people must be central to finding and sustaining these solutions. Almost 2 billion young people around the world do not have the luxury of choosing not to care about this issue. And with the help of the United Nations and its member countries, we will find solutions. Otherwise it is us, our communities and our future that will face the consequences.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Getschel for her briefing.

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

I call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

**Sheikh Al Sabah** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Your Excellency Mr. Vargas Maldonado, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the friendly Dominican Republic, for presiding over this meeting to address the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security. I would like also to remind the international community of the need to support the countries that are most affected.

I thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme; Mr. Pavel Kabat, Chief Scientist of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO); and Ms. Lindsay Getschel, Research Assistant at the Environmental Security Program of the Stimson Center, for their valuable briefings.

Climate change has been a major international concern in recent years. Many important international conferences have been held to discuss the best ways to address that phenomenon. Those endeavours and tireless efforts of the international community resulted in the adoption of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015 — a historic achievement to the upholding and implementation of which we must be committed in order to spare Earth further deterioration. Recent scientific studies underscore that the deterioration is moving at a pace faster than the steps we are taking to protect and preserve the environment.

The adverse impacts of climate change are evident. Millions of people are suffering across the world owing to food insecurity, water scarcity and other health hazards that affect people and living organisms as a result of floods, storms, desertification and rising temperatures and sea and ocean levels that



will threaten the very existence of a number of island States in the Pacific Ocean in the coming years. Those facts underline the fact that climate change is a cross-border phenomenon and that no country will be spared its impact.

In order to address that phenomenon, all of us have a common but differentiated responsibility. However, that would require political will, cooperation and solidarity at the international and regional levels in order for tangible measures to be taken in accordance with the agreed frameworks aimed at addressing the impact of the phenomenon. That includes measures that would implement the principles and purposes of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, as well as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, in order to limit the global temperature rise to less than 2°C or to 1.5°C, if possible, by 2020.

We are concerned about the assertion of WMO that in 2015, 2016 and 2017 global temperatures saw record increases. We hope that the climate summit that the Secretary-General has called for convening in September will make progress, mobilize the required international support and complement the achievements made in the twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was held at the end of last year in the city of Katowice in Poland. Important agreements were made at the Conference to promote transparency and information-sharing on plans and programmes aimed at reducing emissions and increasing financial support to developing countries and those that are most affected by climate change, so as to help them adapt, work towards natural-disaster reduction and continue to implement the guidelines related to the historic Paris Agreement, which will enter into force in 2020.

United Nations estimates show that natural disasters related to climate change are on the rise. They account for 77 per cent of the natural disasters that have occurred over the past two decades. The international community is facing considerable challenges in addressing the emergencies caused by such disasters. They result in the deaths of 3 million people a year and leave many injured and in distress, a number that reached 1.4 billion people over the past two decades.

Climate change is one of the root causes of the challenges and difficulties in the African continent, particularly in the region of Lake Chad basin and the Sahel. It has exacerbated socioeconomic difficulties in

a way that has fuelled conflicts and competition over scarce resources, which has had an impact on security and stability in the region.

International attention to climate change has been accompanied by similar attention from the State of Kuwait. The reality is that, like other countries, we are affected by climate change. Therefore, my country, Kuwait, has shared in the efforts of the international community to address the impact of climate change. We have spared no effort at the local, regional and international levels, in particular since the start of negotiations on the historic Paris Agreement, which we have ratified. The State of Kuwait has paid particular attention to renewable energies and to diversifying energy resources through the use of wind and solar power. That will help meet 15 per cent of the State's energy needs by 2020. The oil sector has also developed strategies to manage greenhouse-gas emissions, with a view to reducing them in order to improve the efficiency of environmentally friendly energy.

Kuwait has also promoted international cooperation and collective work as part of the collective emergency response at the governmental and public levels in the area of humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation. We have also extended a helping hand to peoples of countries facing natural disasters and countries emerging from conflict. That includes emergency relief as well as development and reconstruction programmes. We have assumed our international responsibility in addressing and mitigating natural disaster-related crises. In fact, climate change affects food security, biodiversity, sustainable development, peace and security, the air and water. More than ever, we need to take additional steps and technological measures, adopt new patterns of behaviour and be more ambitious in implementing Sustainable Development Goal 13.

In conclusion, we stress that we will continue to support the efforts of various United Nations organs in the areas of crises and disasters management, peacebuilding and addressing climate change and its impact on security, given the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon. That requires broad discussion in the context of sustainable development, because we believe in addressing the phenomenon with common but differentiated responsibilities in the area of climate-change mitigation and adaptation, in line with national priorities and capacities in order to meet the aspirations of all our peoples.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium.

**Mr. Reynders** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank the Dominican Republic for convening today's meeting. Belgium welcomes the role of the Security Council in addressing the impacts of climate change on international peace and security. I also thank those who spoke at the beginning of the meeting for setting the stage for today's debate.

Today we are seeing mounting evidence of how climate change increases instability and insecurity in places as diverse as the Sahel, the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caribbean and Pacific island States. More frequent and intense extreme weather events, such as hurricanes and droughts, as well as sea-level rise, exacerbate sociopolitical tensions around the world. Given the growing scientific evidence of the disastrous consequences of climate change, there should no longer be any doubt as to the relevance of the issue to the Security Council. The international community must come together to urgently find an ambitious common response. As policymakers, we have a tremendous responsibility. We must heed the call of future generations.

I would like to address the following three issues: the importance of a preventive approach, ways for the Council to better take into account the link between climate change and security, and the response of the United Nations system as a whole.

First, in order to effectively discharge the mandate set out in the Charter of the United Nations, the Council must pay attention to early warning signs and develop greater sensitivity to situations that could lead to conflict, including climate-related situations. Conflict prevention is not only a virtuous policy; it is also a profitable strategy on many levels. In particular, it makes it possible to invest resources in positive and forward-looking actions, rather than having to intervene later through peacekeeping operations, which are more costly and less effective.

Secondly, as to how the Council should approach the problem, it is high time for climate-related risks to be reflected in its regular work. Belgium attaches great importance to the integration of climate risks into country or regional discussions, including with regard to the renewal of peacekeeping mandates. I welcome the recent resolutions that have already taken that factor into account. I am thinking in particular of the Sahel, where

conflicts between herders and farmers have broken out because of the lack of water, and Afghanistan, where drought is causing destabilizing migration flows. It is clear that taking climate risks into account is no longer an option but a necessity, if the Council is to assume its full responsibility and strengthen its capacity to prevent conflicts.

Thirdly, for Belgium, the time has come to further organize around that issue within the United Nations system by bringing together expertise from the various United Nations agencies and departments in order to cross-reference existing knowledge and make it operational. An institutional focal point — a clearing house — would respond to the urgent need to provide the Council with adequate risk analysis and management strategies for countries and regions where that is relevant. That could be done within the Secretariat or through a format that also involves Member States, as is the case with subsidiary bodies.

An annual thematic briefing would be a good point of departure. Detailed analyses and regular reporting by the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and peace operations in the regions concerned would also be useful, and Belgium welcomes cases where that is already being implemented. But let us be clear — it is a question not of unnecessarily burdening the institutional machinery, but of finding ways to bring together the available know-how, in accordance with a unique and integrated United Nations approach.

In the run-up to the Secretary-General's summit on climate change in September 2019 will again be a pivotal year for our response to climate change. Its consequences will be all the more catastrophic if our actions lack ambition. We must do more to mitigate catastrophic climate change and fully implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, but we must also adapt to a warming world.

The results of the twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties in Katowice, Poland, are an important step in building adaptive capacity, increasing resilience to climate change and reducing vulnerability to climate change. Our Council must also contribute to that effort by taking a greater interest in the link between climate and security and more closely involving the United Nations system as a whole. That is why today's debate is crucial. I am convinced that it will continue here and elsewhere.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia.

**Mrs. Marsudi** (Indonesia): I wish to applaud you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. I also thank the briefers for their insightful presentations.

Climate change is real, and it is happening now. I was born in Semarang — a peaceful coastal city of the island of Java, Indonesia. It is located in a low-lying delta. Since the city's establishment in the seventeenth century, its coastal area has always been prone to sea-water flooding, which we call "rob flooding", during the rainy season. Climate change has further exacerbated that vulnerability. The prevalence of rob flooding has increased. According to research done by the United Nations Population Fund, Semarang, my hometown, will experience climate-related sea-level rise by 40 to 80 centimetres in the next 100 years, thereby expanding the potential inundation area inland by 1.7 to 3 square kilometres. My hometown shows clearly that the security threats of climate change are indisputable. However, as an economically dynamic city, Semarang has the capacity to adapt.

But that is certainly not the case for many other places around the globe. When there is no capacity to adapt, potential security threats become real security threats — from the loss of livelihoods to irregular migration; from food scarcity to the loss of territory; and perhaps even the survival of a nation is jeopardized. Indonesia therefore truly shares the concerns of small islands developing States about the survival of our nations. The question then is: How should the Security Council respond to that threat? Allow me to highlight some pertinent points.

First, the Security Council must consolidate efforts to better respond to the security impacts of climate change — I repeat, the security impacts of climate change, not climate change itself. In past discussions, the Security Council has acknowledged the negative security implications of climate change in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. We can build upon past accomplishments. One concrete step that we can take is to better equip our peacekeepers with the capacity to undertake military operations other than war — to carry out not only peacekeeping operations but also climate peace missions. In that context, Indonesian peacekeepers stand ready to share their experience with military operations other than war.

Secondly, our approach to peacekeeping and peacebuilding must — and I repeat must — ensure synergy between security and development. One cannot exist without the other. Therefore, efforts towards peace must take into account the often-overlooked aspect of sustainable development.

Thirdly, I wish to reiterate that the responsibility to respond to the security impact of climate change lies with the countries concerned. Instead of interfering, what we must do is assist based on actual needs and priorities. Indonesia stands ready to contribute. We have extended technical assistance to the Pacific and Africa to enhance their adaptive capacity. We are committed to doing more.

The role of regional organizations should not be overlooked, as the impacts often spill into neighbouring countries. In our own region, we are proud that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has strengthened the capacity of its Humanitarian Assistance Centre in providing a coordinated response — one ASEAN, one response.

Finally, our homework in the Council is to better define what falls under the ambit of climate change itself and what constitutes the security dimension of climate-related impacts. The United Nations system must work in synergy, according to the respective competencies and mandates of its bodies.

For Indonesia, while the Security Council can deal with the security dimension of climate change, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change remains the leading forum to address climate change. Upholding the Paris Agreement on Climate Change is absolutely vital. The Security Council may rest assured that Indonesia stands ready to contribute to global efforts to combat climate change.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

**Mr. Maas** (Germany): Conflicts are part and parcel of the Security Council's day-to-day business, but we do not often have the opportunity to take a step back and consider the causes of those conflicts. I would therefore like to thank you, Mr. President, for inviting us to do that today.

I would like to tell members of the Council about someone who did not just take one step back, but around 570,000 steps. It was from up high at the International Space Station that the German astronaut Alexander

Gerst gazed down on our planet for six months last year. The images that he beamed back to Earth shocked many people in Europe. The driest summer since records began had clearly left its mark. It was even visible from space. What is usually a green continent at that time of year resembled a yellow-brown steppe. I have brought some of those pictures with me. The consequences of that drought are crop losses running into the billions; catastrophic forest fires, even in northern Europe; and in some regions of Germany, fuel started to become scarce as the water level in rivers was too low for tanker ships.

I know that all that sounds harmless compared with the disasters caused by climate-related extreme weather in other parts of the world. In the Sahel, there is an increasing number of conflicts because of the lack of water and land for farming. As Lake Chad shrinks, the livelihoods of entire populations are disappearing — the perfect breeding ground for extremism and terrorism. In Iraq, water scarcity is undermining the prospects for lasting peace. In Afghanistan and Yemen, water tables have fallen dramatically. We still remember the forest fires that raged in California, and rising sea levels and hurricanes threaten the very existence of a number of island States, including in your region, Mr. President.

Climate change is real. It is having a global impact, and it is increasingly becoming a threat to international peace and security. That is why the debate about the policy consequences of climate change belongs here in the Security Council. It must become routine for us to take the link between climate and security into account in all conflict situations. We should focus on three aspects.

First, all United Nations Member States need access to reliable and comprehensive information. That is why systematic reporting by the Secretary-General on the security-related impacts of climate change is so important.

Secondly, the Security Council needs sound risk analyses and forecasts with clear recommendations for action. Our Swedish friends have strengthened the capacities of the United Nations system to that end, and we want to continue along that path.

Thirdly, we must work even harder to translate our knowledge about climate change into tangible policy within the mandates of United Nations missions and, above all, in the work of the United Nations in the field. The United Nations ability to analyse the situation

on the ground must be strengthened. Our partners, especially regional organizations, need early warning capacities, and we must support those regions that are most affected by climate change through quick-impact projects.

Those are key priorities for Germany as a member of the Security Council. I am glad that we are not alone here. Last year, we established the Group of Friends on Climate and Security, together with Nauru and partners from around the world. The Group is supported by a broad international network of experts. Together, we will submit proposals to the Security Council on how we can improve our response. We want to deepen our discussion about the issue at a high-level conference on climate and security to be held in Berlin on 4 June. Allow me to invite all present to join us at that conference.

One hundred and twenty-five years after Fridtjof Nansen's polar expedition, a new mission to the Arctic is to be launched in September. For one year, the German research vessel *RV Polarstern* will travel through the frozen polar sea ice — some 150 days in the polar night. Approximately 600 scientists from 17 countries will be on board, including women and men from Belgium, China, France, Poland, Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom. They will all be united by a common goal, namely, to warn humankind about the worst consequences of climate change. Climate change is real. It is having a global impact, and that is why it should bring together not only scientists on board a ship, but also us here in the Security Council. The Arctic is an early-warning system for climate change. The Security Council must become an early-warning system for international policy. That is our shared responsibility.

**Mr. Kurtyka** (Poland): Let me first sincerely thank the Dominican Republic for inviting me here today to share Poland's perspective on the issue of climate change and security. Let me also take this opportunity, Mr. President, to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. Before starting, I would also like to thank the briefers for their contribution to our discussion, namely, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Mr. Achim Steiner, Mr. Pavel Kabat and Ms. Lindsay Getschel.

Today's discussion focusing on the existential threat posed by natural disasters for small island developing States encourages us in the Council to look at that threat from the preventive and security perspective in order to address them in an effective and innovative

way. I am speaking to the Council not only as Secretary of State in the Ministry of Environment of Poland. This year, I also have the privilege to preside over the twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24) in Katowice. I would like to thank our briefers who mentioned Katowice as an important milestone on our way forward.

I will address three points. First, let me share with the Council why we think the issue of climate change and security is pertinent; secondly, what tools could be used in order to address the corresponding nexus in an adequate manner; and, thirdly, some information on the newly adopted global tool to address global climate change, known as the Katowice rulebook.

First, concerning the issue of “why”, climate change is happening all over the world. I am sure that I do not have to convince anyone here about the urgency and seriousness of the problem. It is an existential threat. Usually, climate-related events are very local in nature, but such local events have a butterfly effect. They impact people’s livelihoods, security and ability to provide, produce and function, and, through all that, they create an inflammatory ground on which a potential conflict can ignite. We do not have to look far to find examples of climate-induced conflicts destabilizing — sometimes quite unexpectedly — entire regions, for instance, as has been repeatedly mentioned, the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel region. Therefore, addressing that issue is not just our responsibility, but also in our own interest.

Let me turn to the tools. One might ask: What can the Security Council do about it? Let me turn the Council’s attention to two aspects.

First, creating a safe and secure world for all is not just about reaction. It is also about anticipation and prevention. As my colleagues from Belgium and Germany mentioned earlier, all countries potentially affected by such threats should be equipped with an accurate early-warning information-gathering system that would alert us to potential climate-induced flare-ups and conflict. That goal can be successfully reached by implementing activities under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aimed at enhancing the resilience of risk-exposed States. All States and organizations should use the full potential of their field offices and missions in order to gather and share such information.

Secondly, the issue of climate change and security should gain prominence in the Security Council through regular discussions and debates as a preventive tool, focusing on solutions and monitoring. The Security Council should be regularly briefed on the threats and the progress in addressing and mitigating the global security implications of climate change.

Thirdly, let me turn to the global response and direct the attention of representatives to the achievements of the United Nations climate summit that took place in Katowice in December. I again thank the representative of Kuwait and many other speakers who have mentioned that important event. I had the privilege to preside over that global climate conference, known as COP24.

The tangible impacts of climate change may be local, but the solution that must be found is clearly a global one. That is why the only way to address the problem at its source must be implemented through a concerted global effort. After long negotiations, we adopted a document called the Katowice rulebook, which makes the Paris Agreement operational. It is important for the following reasons. First, it provides clarity on how, when and according to which formula all countries of the world must act. Secondly, it shifts the world onto a path towards a concrete and single transparency system. Thirdly, it creates a very specific framework around the provision of climate finance and other support to those countries that need it.

Holding the presidency of the global climate process for the fourth time, Poland contributed to strengthening the global response to climate change. We have a great deal of experience and understanding of the issues with which countries are grappling and the scale of the problem before us. The climate-related threats oblige us to be responsive and responsible.

Today, as President of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and a member of the Security Council, Poland would like to once again underscore that climate change is a destabilizing force in our world and deserves attention and action on the part of the Security Council in order to achieve durable and sustainable peace on our planet Earth.

**Lord Ahmad** (United Kingdom): May I first join others in thanking you, Mr. President, for scheduling this debate today and for giving the Security Council the opportunity to further consider the threat posed to international peace and security by climate change. The Dominican Republic’s own experience has encouraged

you to be a powerful advocate for this issue and a leader in this field. I am sure that I speak for all in saying that we look forward to your remarks later in the debate. I also wish to thank all the briefers, but I was particularly struck by the contribution of Ms. Lindsay Getschel. By drawing attention to the challenge of climate change and the importance of the consideration of the youth, all countries should acknowledge that we should not only engage the youth but also involve them in finding the solutions. From the perspective of my Government, and I am sure that I speak for many in the Chamber and beyond, I certainly make that commitment because it is important that we work together to find common solutions, and the youth have an important role to play.

This is also an extremely important issue for the United Kingdom. Indeed, we were the first country to raise the issue in the Security Council, in 2007 (see S/PV.5663). We are particularly concerned about small island developing States and least developed countries, including almost 60 per cent of our fellow Commonwealth members, which face an existential threat from climate change and associated natural disasters.

Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo mentioned the devastation of Hurricane Irma in 2017. I, too, visited the Caribbean in the wake of Hurricane Irma, where the devastation but, more importantly, the determination of the people left a deep and lasting impression on me. Our Prime Minister, Mrs. May, has said that there is a clear moral imperative for developed economies to help those that stand to lose most from the consequences of man-made climate change. Through our International Climate Fund, we support cleaner economic growth and have helped more than 21 million people to prepare for the risk of increased droughts and floods. Between 2016 and 2020, we pledged to provide at least \$7 billion in support to the Fund, and we aim for a balance in our spending on adaptation and mitigation. We have also sought to strengthen our work within the Caribbean region to build resilience by bringing together resources, capabilities, assets and expertise to show a collaborative and strengthened response to the challenge posed by extreme weather events.

We all acknowledge that climate change is not an abstract, theoretical risk. It is real and is happening now. Severe weather events that used to happen, as was often said, once in a century now occur two or three times in a decade, sometimes more often. They impact essential resources and drive people from their homes. They threaten sustainable development, including our ability

to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and to trade, and they exacerbate conflict and instability. The situation is in fact much graver than previously thought. Research by the United Kingdom's independent Climate Change Committee, in collaboration with the China Expert Panel on Climate Change, recently concluded that we have significantly underestimated the social and, indeed, the economic risk of climate change.

That risk, of course, threatens us all. It is therefore important that we all contribute to the solution, including through discussions such as the important one we are having now. In Paris in 2015, the international community rallied together to find a shared solution to this shared and common problem. As the British Prime Minister has said, the Paris Agreement is a vital pillar of the rules-based international system. We must now accelerate global action to meet the commitments that we have made, and we must heed the call of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to increase our ambition. That includes through our existing partnerships. For example, last April in London, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to the Paris Agreement and to pursuing efforts to limit the increase in global average temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. I, too, pay tribute to Poland's leadership at the twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

In that vein, we strongly commend the Secretary-General's efforts to refocus the United Nations on the urgent need to address climate change. In our view, the United Nations needs to enhance its approach to climate security in three important ways.

First, with respect to information-sharing, we must make better use of the climate risk data available in the private sector and, importantly, in civil society. We must integrate that data into decision-making across the entire United Nations system.

Secondly, we need to consider all risks, including climate-related risks, in a holistic way and when planning and implementing solutions to peace and, indeed, security issues. As mentioned by Mr. Heiko Maas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, the Security Council has started to reflect that in recent resolutions, in particular — I agree with him — on the issues of Lake Chad, Somalia, the Sahel, Mali and Darfur. The task now is to ensure effective

implementation and, importantly, integration into our development, peacebuilding and humanitarian work. The United Kingdom welcomes the piloting of a mini-mechanism to ensure that information is available to United Nations reporting, but it should explore ways to go further, for example, by improving the coordination and integration of United Nations agencies and missions that manage climate-related security risks on the ground.

Finally, we must invest in resilience. The United Kingdom will lead efforts aimed at increasing resilience, ahead of the Secretary-General's climate summit this year, while collaborating with a range of actors to launch what we hope to be genuinely transformational actions. Again, to Ms. Getschel, I would say that I am sure her suggestions have caused us all to reflect, and that, from a Commonwealth perspective, I have the opportunity to host youth ambassadors from the Commonwealth in London next week. I will certainly be reflecting very strongly on her suggestions and recommendations in the coming days.

In economic terms alone, this makes sense. Investing and preparedness to respond will on average cut in half — yes, half — the cost of deploying humanitarian aid in the wake of a disaster, and it can also speed up crisis response by up to two weeks. Resilience also presents a huge opportunity for supporting employment and spreading prosperity, which of course accelerates development and ultimately enhances security. Through the United Kingdom-led Centre for Global Disaster Protection, we are working with developing countries to increase their preparedness, and indeed resilience to climate change and natural disasters.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that climate-related security challenges are real; they are here and they are now. We must work together to ensure the United Nations system is able to holistically consider climate risks in decision-making and, most important, integrate them into mission planning and ultimately into implementation.

**Mr. Ma Zhaoxu** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes you to New York, Sir, to preside over today's meeting. China highly appreciates the initiative of the Dominican Republic to convene this open debate. I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Administrator Steiner, Mr. Kabat and Ms. Getschel for their briefings.

Climate change is a major challenge that affects the future and destiny of humankind. Climate change

induces natural disasters, wreaks havoc in many parts of the world and poses grave threats to food security, water resources, the ecological environment, energy, human life and property. These issues have even become disruptive factors in certain regions, undermining peace and stability.

Easing the impact of climate-change-related disasters obviously serves global stability. In facing this global challenge, the international community needs to step up cooperation and respond together. In this regard, from the perspective of maintaining international peace and security, I would like today to share with participants the following three points.

First, it is necessary to uphold multilateralism and foster a sense of community and shared future for humankind. In the face of climate change, no country can stay aloft by itself. Countries should strengthen exchanges and cooperation on climate change, adhere to multilateral mechanisms and earnestly fulfil their international obligations. It is important to increase funding and technical support to developing countries to assist them in coping with climate change and improving their ability to adapt to it. The relevant United Nations agencies should properly address and respond to climate-change-related issues in line with a division of labour and their respective functions.

Secondly, we need to explore green and low-carbon transitional and sustainable development pathways tailored to national specificities. Peace and development are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. The international community needs to embrace a vision of global governance hinged on consultation, contribution and benefits-sharing and advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development across the board, give priority to poverty reduction, and tackle development imbalances and inadequate development. We need to pursue sustainable development and its drive to address through common development such climate-change-related issues as food insecurity, humanitarian crises and mass migration.

Thirdly, we should acknowledge and respect countries' differences, especially in developing countries, and take seriously the daunting challenges facing small island developing States and least developed countries. The international community should implement in earnest the Paris Agreement on Climate Change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and uphold

the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Developed countries should continue to spearhead emission reductions and help developing countries, in particular small island developing States, to upgrade their capacity in adaptation, mitigation, management and financing.

China has been actively engaged in the global response to climate change. We have been a contributor to this cause. We have been earnestly fulfilling our international obligations under, inter alia, the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, while making active contributions to the global fight against climate change to the best of our ability and on the basis of our national conditions. China will continue to implement our South-South cooperation commitments on climate change and support developing countries in addressing related challenges. China stands ready to work with the international community to build a world of lasting peace, universal security, common prosperity, openness and inclusiveness — a world that is clean and beautiful.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank all the briefers at today's meeting.

The position of the Russian Federation with regard to the security impacts of climate change is well known. We deem it excessive, and even counterproductive, to consider climate change in the Security Council, whose aim under the Charter of the United Nations is to swiftly respond to serious challenges to international peace and security. We consider that this practice undercuts the current system of division of labour within the United Nations. Yes, the climate is changing. However, climate change is not a universal challenge in the context of international security. Accordingly, it should be considered specific to each specific situation, which was confirmed by briefer Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo.

In some situations, as Achim Steiner pointed out, climate change can be an additional risk factor in some countries and regions. However, a generalized linking of the topic of climate change with peace can lead to the false assumption that the problems of the environment are unavoidable and always lead to conflict. Furthermore, if, for example, we take the Sahel region, which was mentioned in the concept note (S/2019/1, annex), then we should not shift focus onto climate and droughts while pushing to the backburner the real main reasons for the conflict, which include the proactive

actions of a number of countries that led to regime change in Libya and the terrible impact of the NATO air strikes, including on the country's oil and oil-field infrastructure. Today, in another region now, we once again see a demonstration of how external provocations to exacerbate domestic crises with specific ambitious goals, as well as abuses of international law, and this is precisely what the Security Council should work on.

Coming back to climate, I would like to point out that nobody denies that the challenges in this area require a comprehensive approach. Every opportunity to fully develop such approaches is provided by the existing specialized bodies within the United Nations, where rather than mere cosmetic efforts, concrete, expert-level work is conducted to that end.

The Russian Federation has unfailingly advocated the expansion of international cooperation to reduce the risk of disasters and to strengthen resilience to them. We support the Organization's central role in that regard. We consider that in order to ensure effectiveness we must engage in professional dialogue based on in-depth expertise and relevant knowledge, first and foremost as part of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

We believe that the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa, which was adopted at the third World Conference on Disaster Reduction and endorsed by General Assembly resolution 69/283, is the main mechanism for exchanging experiences and best practices in order to strengthen the global architecture of international cooperation in the area of disaster risk reduction.

It is important to foster cooperation at the regional level by tapping into the potential of the regional economic commissions. As a result of the decision taken by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific concerning the use of space technology for sustainable development, the Asia-Pacific region became the first to benefit from practical high-tech development in the field of disaster risk reduction within Organization's regional commission, and there has been a great deal of interest in further exploring such development.

We urge the Council to focus on the provision of technical assistance and on strengthening the potential of developing countries, which are the most vulnerable to natural disasters due to challenges in the socioeconomic sphere. The Russian Federation provides assistance to small island developing States



in the southern Pacific Ocean in order to promote sustainability in the face of disasters. We do so through the United Nations Development Programme, various other specialized programmes, funds and agencies, as well as the International Civil Defence Organization.

Technical assistance projects are being undertaken to strengthen prevention and response to natural disasters for the Commonwealth of Independent States countries and to deal with the aftermath of natural disasters in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Middle East. It is important for all States that are able to do so to provide comprehensive assistance to countries in need in order to strengthen the overall potential of disaster risk reduction.

As for problems associated with climate change, we deem the most pertinent challenge facing the international community to be ensuring total compliance with the rules for implementing, in the framework of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the comprehensive document approved at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December.

We need to focus on specific measures taken at the global and national levels that are greatly contribut to preventing the rise in temperature, lower the risk of the increasing frequency and destructiveness of natural disasters, and mitigate their effects and their adverse socioeconomic impact for the most vulnerable countries and regions. Climate risks must also be taken into consideration, not in a generic way but in the context of discussing specific and real situations on the Council's agenda — if they exist and if they are real.

**Mr. Ipo** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire thanks the presidency of the Dominican Republic for organizing this public debate on the impact of climate disasters on international peace and security, which is critical. My delegation commends Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and the other briefers for their excellent presentations.

My country aligns itself with the statement to be made by Ms. Fatima Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations.

The issue of the impact of climate disasters on international peace and security has a prominent place in the world's current security concerns. My country notes that the frequency and growing intensity of

natural disasters and their direct or indirect impact on peace and security in the affected regions are without precedent in modern history. That development is linked, among other things, to the combination of world population growth and climate change. While in the early 1990s there were fewer than 300 disasters per year worldwide, experts have registered more than 500 annually since the early 2000s. In addition, they estimate that more than half of the population in developing countries is expected to be at risk from floods and/or storms by 2025.

Just as the increase in natural disasters is partly due to the worsening of climatic phenomena, the material and human damage they cause is linked to urban growth and the concentration of populations in at-risk areas, particularly in coastal regions. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, 700,000 people lived in flood-prone coastal areas in 2000; that figure will reach 5 million in 2030 and up to 25 million in 2060, according to the most pessimistic forecasts.

In an environment of soaring population growth, coupled with the scarcity of arable land and water resources, natural disasters could trigger or aggravate social tensions that could degenerate into open conflicts. Similarly, in a context where early-warning and health-response mechanisms cannot contain the scope of disasters, these can spread water-borne or vector-borne diseases.

Africa is now one of the regions most exposed to the effects of climate change on peace and security. The case of Côte d'Ivoire is a perfect illustration. Ranked 147 out of the 178 countries most vulnerable to climate change, my country, like many others, is experiencing the negative impact of such disasters, with adverse effects for forests, agriculture and food security, in addition to sparking community conflicts, particularly between farmers and nomadic herders.

In response, my country has adopted a national climate change programme that aims, among other things, to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 28 per cent and increase the share of renewable energies in its energy mix by 16 per cent by 2030. In response to natural disasters, my country established the National Civil Protection Office to facilitate the rapid provision of assistance to affected populations. My delegation stresses the need for the United Nations and international partners to work to strengthen national

capacities in the fight against climate change and the management of natural disasters.

Côte d'Ivoire believes that addressing the impact on peace and security of natural disasters related to climate change cannot take place exclusively within the framework of national strategies. To be effective, they must be consistent with existing continent-wide and international frameworks. My country therefore endorses the relevant recommendations of the 174th meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council, held on 21 May in Addis Ababa, on the link between climate change and conflict in Africa and the security implications. They include developing a continental framework to proactively respond to real and potential security threats posed by climate change; actively seeking comprehensive approaches to enhance resilience to climate change; improving communication on climate change in order to effectively ensure disaster preparedness and risk reduction from the local to the continental level; and finally, accelerating the implementation of all existing international and regional commitments on mitigating the adverse effects of climate change, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

For Côte d'Ivoire, the fight against climate change must remain an essential component of our shared commitment to promoting international peace and security. It therefore urges the United Nations, including the Security Council, to play its part in this shared endeavour.

**Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this meeting. We once again welcome the presence of Minister Parenti and the other high officials participating in this open debate on a such a topical and relevant theme. We also thank this morning's briefers — Mr. Achim Steiner, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Mr. Pavel Kabat and Ms. Lindsay Getschel — for their valuable presentations.

This debate enables us to discuss the tasks and competencies of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security through a broad multidimensional approach to security. In this context, it is important to address climate-related risks to human security, which, according to scientific evidence, will increase as a result of global warming and climate change. These risks have the potential to

lead to humanitarian crises, conflicts and disasters that, because of their scope, could pose threats to international peace and security. The consequences certainly transcend the mandate of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and could require a response from the Security Council in the context of its responsibilities related to conflict prevention and resolution.

We welcome the fact that in recent months the Security Council has recognized the adverse effects of climate change on conflict situations in different regions, particularly in Africa, including the Lake Chad region, Somalia, West Africa and the Sahel, Mali and Darfur. Similarly, we recall that the Council has been able to react in a timely manner to natural disasters, such as the earthquake that struck Haiti in 2010, by reinforcing the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti personnel to deal with that emergency.

We also underscore that the International Law Commission decided to include in its agenda the issue of sea-level rise in relation to international law. We stress the particular importance of that issue, given its serious consequences and legal implications for small island developing States, such as is the case of your nation, Mr. President. We hope that those steps in the right direction will lead to specific responses on the part of the international community, and especially the Council, based on an appropriate assessment of the risks and strategies to address them, in line with the reforms promoted by the Secretary-General and the increasing focus on the prevention of conflict and the promotion of sustaining peace. We believe that these functions should be undertaken, bearing in mind the mandates and purviews of different bodies of the system. That is why it is important to develop synergies among the Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with those competent bodies and agencies of the United Nations system with a view to having early warning systems for climate-related risks and other multidimensional threats.

Peru is highly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters. The retreat of the Andean tropical glaciers and the increasingly frequent droughts and floods lead to food insecurity, which undermines our development agenda and, at the same time, raises challenges to maintaining peace. Climate change and related disasters also lead to massive human movement with the potential of generating instability, new demands and challenges.

We conclude by stressing the importance of working on these issues with regional and subregional organizations, financial institutions, the private sector, academia and civil society, around holistic, coherent and efficient strategies, including the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

**Mrs. Gueguen** (France) (*spoke in French*): I commend the Dominican presidency for organizing this open debate. Your country, Mr. President, is on the front lines of tackling climate change and you have rightly made that issue a priority of your presidency. I also thank our briefers for the excellent quality of their statements. The mobilization of young people presented by Ms. Getschel is an important glimmer of hope, and we must not let that hope be lost.

The level of participation in this open debate demonstrates, if there were ever a need, a broad awareness among Member States that the impacts of climate change on international peace and security must be better understood by the United Nations and more specifically by the Security Council. The consequences of climate change on security is considerable. The impacts of climate disasters on humanitarian aspects, on food and health security, and more generally on the economic, demographic and social balances of a human community can be such that they contribute to domestic crises, which in turn may lead to regional and international crises or exacerbate existing conflicts.

Risks know no borders. We therefore share the responsibility of managing them collectively. The Paris Agreement on Climate Change shows us the way by limiting global warming to 2°C, if possible 1.5°C, and calls on us to increase our adaptability and resilience to climate change, especially in the most vulnerable countries, and make financial flows compatible with limiting the global increase in temperature. The Paris Agreement now has implementing guidelines, and I commend the role played by the Polish presidency of the twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

We must endeavour to achieve our goals collectively. The climate summit scheduled for 23 September comes at the right time to create the conditions for achieving our heightened aspirations. France will play an important role in that regard, since, together with Jamaica, it has been entrusted with the task of working on climate finance and funding. I am sure that the summit will send a strong message to the

Council, which must address the risks that the effects of climate change represent for our common peace and security. We must take action to anticipate, prevent and limit those effects. In this context, I would like to share three of France's firm beliefs.

The first is that the risks to international security posed by the impacts of climate change must become a central element of the conflict prevention agenda. We must develop preventive diplomacy that integrates all destabilizing factors, including those related to climate change and the collapse of biodiversity. The second is that a rigorous and regular analysis of these risks is necessary and in the international public interest. The United Nations, and within it the Security Council and the Secretary-General, must play a pivotal role in this regard. The third belief is that this risk analysis must be accompanied by preventive measures that will be implemented by national Governments, regional organizations, development partners and United Nations agencies. Bolstered by those beliefs, France would like to work with all Member States on several proposals it has shared, including two main ones.

The first proposal aims to provide us with a tool for collective analysis and early warning of the impacts of climate change on global peace and security. Data and analysis tools exist, but they are scattered in think tanks, among States and even within the United Nations among its various agencies. We must bring them together in a central place and give them a voice. What is missing is a guardian — a guarantor of the scientific message that can build consensus on the links between climate and security. France would like to see the Secretary-General play this role by submitting an annual report to the General Assembly and the Security Council that assesses the risks to peace and security posed by the impacts of climate change in all regions of the world and within different timeframes.

It is also important to fully implement the request put forward by the Council in its presidential statement S/PRST/2011/15, of July 2011, adopted upon Germany's initiative, that the reports of the Secretary-General on the conflicts on the Council's agenda include contextual information with regard to the impact of climate change on those conflicts. In this way, we could anticipate and implement appropriate responses to the threats to peace and security that already exist in some regions, such as the Sahel or island States, but also, in southern Africa, Central America or South-East Asia, which may be less immediate but could in due course have an equally

disastrous impact on security. At the national level, France has initiated research programmes to develop a typology of crises for the most vulnerable regions, in particular in the Mediterranean and Pacific areas. This work could feed into the Secretary-General's report.

The second proposal by France concerns the role of the United Nations in developing recommendations for concrete actions to prevent conflicts. Faced with these risks for security, we must mobilize a wide range of tools, from emergency aid to development policies. In some cases, such as after an extreme weather event, humanitarian measures will be urgently needed. In other cases, it will be necessary to help communities adapt to the inescapable rise in sea levels, drought and soil degradation. Sometimes, it will be necessary to give small farmers insurance mechanisms that will enable them to restart economic activity quickly after a climate disaster rather than having to migrate to other areas. The United Nations can and should play an important role in developing these recommendations and in coordinating the efforts that will need to be implemented.

At the national level, donor countries such as France must adapt their development policies. In this regard, France has initiated several projects, including the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems initiative — with the World Meteorological Organization, the Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction — that seeks to strengthen the capacity of early warning systems in least developed countries and small island developing States to deal with extreme climate events. At this stage, nearly €40 million out of €100 have already been disbursed, making it possible to finance five national projects, three regional multi-country projects in the Caribbean, West Africa and the Pacific, as well as a post-disaster study in the Caribbean.

Faced with these certain risks, we cannot take refuge in denial or misinformation. We can anticipate and respond to these risks and prevent conflicts. That is the role of the United Nations and the role of the Council. France is committed to working tirelessly with all at this table to make this goal a reality in the coming months.

**Mr. Cohen** (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for calling this important meeting. I welcome the many ministers joining us today.

I would also like to thank Administrator Steiner, Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Mr. Kabat and Ms. Getschel for their contributions and helpful framing of today's discussion.

Many of our nations have experienced devastating natural disasters in recent years, from hurricanes to floods to droughts, affecting 2 billion people worldwide in the past decade alone. These events inflict loss of life, the destruction of property and the displacement of citizens. They increase the risk of food insecurity and disease outbreak.

This past year, the United States experienced the deadliest wildfire in the history of my home state of California and one of the strongest hurricanes on record to hit the United States mainland. We saw devastating flash floods in Maryland and destructive mudslides on our west coast. In Puerto Rico, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration assesses Hurricane Maria to have been the most destructive hurricane to hit the island in modern times. That catastrophic hurricane led to loss of life and more than \$90 billion in damage.

We have seen how natural disasters can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, threatening critical infrastructure that citizens rely on to reliably deliver food, water and shelter in the wake of such events. This makes things harder for everyone — from relief workers to police forces to national militaries — as they try to access remote areas, supply their teams and deliver needed services. Natural disasters also frequently lead to breakdowns in social order and spikes in crime, violence and instability.

Over time, incomplete recovery from repeated severe natural disasters erodes and impedes development, including of critical infrastructure and institutions. Particularly in communities with a history of conflict or civil violence, this can create conditions that allow illicit activities to flourish.

It is the policy of the United States to provide humanitarian and relief assistance to help countries deal with extreme weather events and natural disasters.

The East Coast of the United States and our Caribbean neighbours to the south have always been subject to devastating hurricanes, and for generations the United States has experienced and dealt with earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts, floods and other environmental disasters. We are constantly learning new and better ways to mitigate their effects

and to protect lives and property. When possible to enact, good zoning laws in fire zones, flood plains or areas vulnerable to coastal storm surges can significantly reduce losses, as can good building codes. Early warning has saved countless lives. The United States has and will continue to share best practices with its neighbours and friends who face extreme environmental challenges.

Central America and the Caribbean have suffered greatly from the follow-on effects of natural disasters. Hurricanes have impacted national economies and created huge recovery needs. Recent droughts have exacerbated food and water insecurity and contributed to new migration flows in the region. In response to Hurricane Matthew in Haiti, the United States supported recovery needs with \$100 million of assistance, including critical governance, health, shelter support and food assistance for the more than 1.8 million people, as well as cash to revive destroyed farms and restore livelihoods. In response to drought in Central America, the United States is working with partners to provide support for new agriculture technology and to improve the business environment for small scale farmers as a means to boost productivity, incomes and resilience.

Beyond the Caribbean and Central America, the United States is partnering with Governments and regional organizations to bring relief and disaster preparedness to those who need it most. It is the right thing to do, and it also helps preserve order, maintain basic services to populations suddenly in need, and mitigate the threat of instability after a natural disaster. Each nation must do its part, but we believe that the Security Council and its member States can and should play an especially important role in this common effort to assist with disaster preparedness and response.

As other speakers have done, we encourage the Security Council member States and United Nations agencies to increase information-sharing and identify best practices for post-disaster recovery. We each focus on a small piece of this challenge, and aggregating data will improve our overall understanding.

As Lindsay Getschel and other speakers have suggested, we would also like to see Security Council members explore ways in which the United Nations special political missions can place a greater focus on post-disaster resilience. The United States will be assessing how best to incorporate this work into relevant

mandates, and we encourage our friends around this table to do the same.

**Mr. Ndong Mba** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): My statement is in line with that to be delivered by the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations.

The participation of a large number of high-level speakers in this debate is ample testimony to the critical and major importance of the item under discussion. We therefore thank His Excellency Mr. Miguel Vargas Maldonado, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, and his delegation for convening this debate to address the worrisome topic of the impact of climate-related natural disasters on the maintenance of international peace and security.

Likewise, we thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Mr. Achim Steiner, Mr. Pavel Kabat and Ms. Lindsay Getschel for their participation and excellent briefings, which provided the Chamber with all the information necessary to address this issue.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is aware that climate change is a phenomenon of global dimension whose effects pose a direct and obvious threat to the existence of humankind. In that context, it is one of the biggest challenges we face in the coming decades. In that regard, our delegation considers this phenomenon to be not only an environmental issue, but also a cross-cutting matter that affects many areas, including the economy and international peace and security, among others. It not a direct cause in and of itself, but its environmental aspect is a multiplier of the threat posed by its cross-cutting nature, as we can understand from the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

It can be deduced from the same report that the effects of climate change are more evident and pronounced in the most vulnerable places, such as island States, countries in conflict or those that do not have adequate resources to address the problem. Therefore, we believe that one measure to address this phenomenon is the promotion of policies designed to promote development and eradicate poverty; to establish a system of assistance and global cooperation on environmental issues so as to ensure the efficient and sustainable management of natural resources linked to a sustainable political, economic and social system that also and above all benefits the most vulnerable areas and with less resources; and to create strategies for

the fight against climate change that can be applied nationally and globally.

In this regard, we believe that the United Nations should play a relevant role in the early and effective creation and implementation of such measures by, *inter alia*, providing the technical, legal and political assistance necessary to prevent, combat or resolve crises caused by the adverse effects of climate change. We are interested in the Council's views on the expansion of conflicts, which requires it to play a role in raising awareness of the issue and to be the driver of related measures.

Africa is probably the continent most vulnerable to climate change, as the effects of climate change are having an impact on peace and security. Despite the fact that it is one of the regions that produces the least greenhouse gases, Africa continues to strengthen its efforts to work towards the implementation of measures aimed at sustainable development, translating them into long-term climate actions based on national processes and that are in keeping with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

At the national level, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea has no doubt whatsoever about the reliability of the data clearly showing an alarming rise in global temperature, which will have sweeping negative consequences, including in terms of access to potable water, reduced agricultural productivity, loss of livelihoods and migration. That is why our Government has adopted a series of measures aimed at mitigating the threat of climate change and integrated them into policies and planning processes at the national, regional and local levels. It is also implementing risk-reduction strategies and adaptation measures and strengthening technical capacity in order to tackle climate change risks and manage the areas most affected.

All of this clearly shows the iron-clad commitment of the African continent to the struggle against climate change, a threat that, generally speaking, affects the entire planet and requires joint, multilateral and early action to be taken by all without exception involving a series of globally agreed, transparent and effective measures that guarantee a future for coming generations.

We must take into account the fact that no State can grapple with this phenomenon without the necessary tools and resources. That is why it is important to stress the aspect of cooperation and unity in this regard. Joint

action is necessary, especially in the most polluting countries, or the response to climate change will not be effective.

I wish to say in conclusion that the world already has the necessary tools to face this threat. Now all it needs is unwavering political determination to begin the fight and address this phenomenon.

**Mr. Matjila** (South Africa): Mr. President, we are honoured to see you preside over today's open debate. We thank the Dominican Republic for having arranged this important meeting addressing the impact of climate-related disasters on international peace and security. We are also honoured by and acknowledge the presence in the Council Chamber today of many Ministers.

We would like also to thank the many briefers for the information they provided to the Council. We took note of the remarks made by Ms. Getschel and amplified by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon regarding the role of youth in this debate.

We associate ourselves with the statement to be delivered by Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed on behalf of the African Union.

South Africa fully shares the views expressed by the Secretary-General at the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018, where he stated that

“climate change is the single most important issue we face. It affects all our plans for sustainable development and a safe, secure and prosperous world”.

The Secretary-General has issued a warning that time is running out to address climate change. That warning is premised on the clear findings of the international scientific community, as well as by the new reality of increasingly frequent and extreme climate-related disasters. The special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the impact of a 1.5°C temperature rise confirms that we are already seeing the consequences of climate change for nature and for people and their livelihoods and that the worst is yet to come.

We note with great concern the erratic nature and ferocity of the natural calamities that have struck the Caribbean and many islands, including those in the

Pacific, such as hurricanes; in Indonesia and Japan, repeated tsunamis; in Australia and the United States of America, devastating wildfires; in Europe, floods and heavy snows; and in Africa, drought, among others. These natural catastrophes caused untold human suffering, destroyed the livelihoods of millions of people and displaced hundreds of millions more.

Africa is particularly vulnerable to climate change as the single greatest threat to its development and prosperity. We in South Africa have experienced devastating weather events in recent years, with several regions of our country suffering their worst drought in decades. Africa therefore stands in full solidarity with other regions similarly affected by natural disasters, such as those highlighted in the concept note prepared by the Dominican Republic (S/2019/1, annex). We remain firmly committed to addressing climate change and responding to natural disasters at the national, regional and international levels.

It is clear to us that climate change is a global sustainable development challenge that can realistically be addressed only if we do so collectively, through a rules-based multilateral regime that is based on science, equity and a differentiation in terms of action and support between countries with very different national circumstances. Climate action needs to be dramatically scaled up while protecting and furthering the development gains of developing countries and eradicating poverty.

We have strong foundations for this multilateral solution already in the form of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reinforced by regional development programmes such as the African Union's Agenda 2063. We look to the UNFCCC, its Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement for policy direction and leadership on climate change and also refer to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

In those security situations that are within the purview of the Security Council where climate change is thought to be a significant factor contributing to insecurity, such as the Sahel and Somalia, it is important that the Council highlight climate change as a factor that must be addressed by the international community. By adding its voice to the conversation, the Security Council will increase awareness of the problem, which will, hopefully, in turn help to mobilize global action and the provision of means of implementation and support to developing countries. The Council

may also help with the preparation of context-specific risk-mitigation strategies that address all factors leading to insecurity. However, as the IPCC and other evidence-based studies have shown, it is often difficult to determine a direct causal nexus between climate change and natural disasters, on the one hand, and threats to international peace and security, on the other. In specific circumstances, they may be an exacerbating factor, or threat multiplier, to more direct and specific root causes of conflict. That reality has been recognized in Africa, where the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns by 2020 identifies a number of key areas as constituting serious threats to the African peace and security agenda, including, potentially, climate change.

The true nature of the threat posed by climate change is existential and global in nature. We therefore need a multilateral response that gives a voice to the widest possible representation of States, and with a strong role for all other stakeholders. As the Secretary-General has often said, the solution lies in a transformation of the global economy. And that "requires inclusivity, because everyone is affected by climate change". In that regard, we should be aware that the Security Council's limited membership and specific peace and security focus means that it may not be the appropriate forum for addressing the issue of climate change. Consequently, we should be cautious about duplicating the efforts of other bodies in the United Nations system that are better placed to address the matter. However, we remain open to further discussions on the issue.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic.

It is an honour to preside over today's open debate on natural disasters and environmental degradation and their effects on development and international peace and security. I would like to thank all participants in today's debate for their considerable interest in the topic. I would like to warmly welcome and commend my colleagues — Ministers for Foreign Affairs — who are here today. I would also like to thank all of the briefers — Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Mr. Achim Steiner, Mr. Pavel Kabat and Ms. Lindsay Getschel, for their various presentations today.

Considering the link between the effects of climate change and security is a very high priority for the Dominican Republic. The increase in recent years in

the frequency and intensity of extreme natural disasters in the Caribbean raised the alarm in our country and our region. A failure to recognize and address that vulnerability in a timely manner will have serious consequences for our nations, as well as for those of other regions also affected.

At the outset, I would like to emphasize that the attention we give to the link between the environment and security is, from our point of view, consistent with efforts that we make, together with other members of the international community, to build an institutional architecture that responds to the multiple challenges posed by environmental degradation. The United Nations and its subsidiary bodies have made significant progress in considering the issue from the perspective of its impact on development. The agreements reached during twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Katowice, on the guidelines for implementing the Paris Agreement on Climate Change are a key step in that direction.

Meanwhile, for more than a decade now, the nexus between climate change and security has been addressed sporadically in the Security Council. It is no coincidence that there is renewed interest in the issue, sparked by the debate organized by Sweden in 2018 (see S/PV.8307), the debate we are presiding over today and the plans announced by other members, such as Germany and Belgium, during their time as non-permanent members of the Security Council. Such focus goes hand in hand with an increasing awareness of the urgent challenges posed by environmental degradation and its negative consequences.

We all know that climate change is the greatest global challenge facing humankind and that it requires collective action in order to address all its dimensions. With regard to the link between the environment and security, the Security Council has already set precedents by accepting that environmental change and degradation are risk factors in several conflict-prone areas and that the negative effects of climate change can contribute to destabilization. In the specific instances of Lake Chad and the Sahel, the Council has made it clear that certain effects of climate change are linked to other factors that exacerbate the situation.

All evidence available suggests that the effects of climate change will be felt more strongly at the global level in the coming years. The report of the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change states that, if the current trend continues, by 2030 global warming will lead to greater risks to health, human life, food security, water supply and economic growth. That trend therefore implies the need to prevent such negative effects from becoming root causes of conflict. We therefore believe that it is vital to pay attention to the link between environmental degradation and security and to create mechanisms to address that nexus within the framework of the body responsible for ensuring international peace and security.

We must equip the Security Council with the tools necessary to systematically assess the relationship between the effects of the climate change and conventional risks, in particular in vulnerable areas. In that regard, there are already several ideas on the table to which we must pay attention in order to make the most appropriate decisions. The time has come for us to take those steps, and we hope that today's debate will be a positive contribution in that direction. The nexus between the adverse effects of change climate change and security is perhaps more obvious from the perspective of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and countries suffering from extreme vulnerability, including those of the Central American isthmus.

Our countries are already experiencing a new reality, which includes increasingly severe natural disasters and risks that emerge more gradually, such as human displacement, food insecurity and recurring and unpredictable failures in critical infrastructure. We thank Mr. Steiner for his illustration of the enormous impact of natural disasters and the importance of improving institutional arrangements in order to better coordinate our prevention and response capability.

The Dominican Republic brings to the table the voice of the countries that suffer more intensely the effects of natural disasters as a result of climate change, due to both their geographic location and their institutional and/or economic vulnerabilities. For that reason, we feel that it is particularly urgent for the Security Council to reach consensus on the best way to include climate-related effects in its work on security. We are facing an unconventional threat, which demands that the Council reflect further on its role in the prevention of conflicts. That is a reality that is already present on the ground, which we cannot ignore. Our work must be to adapt to that and update the Council's approach on security with a view to increasing its analytical skills



in order to identify, and eventually prevent, causes of conflict.

In that regard, Ms. DiCarlo was very eloquent in explaining how the consideration of instability and conflicts, which arise at the intersection between climate change and social, economic, demographic and political factors, fall within the purview of work of the Council. Mr. Kabat also showed us the effects on highly-populated areas and particularly vulnerable areas as a result of extreme climatic events, such as floods and droughts.

As other members have already said, it is not appropriate, and it should not be our aim, to duplicate the work of other United Nations organs, but rather to explore ways by which they can complement each other, working within their own mandates. By creating an institutional space for reflection on the link between climate change we would be contributing to the Council's knowledge and equipping it with the mechanisms it needs to ensure the relevance of its analyses of risks and causes, and therefore the effectiveness of its action to promote peace.

It is of the utmost importance for the Council to have the necessary information for it to make strategic decisions, taking into account the impact of unusually fierce natural phenomena on the Sustainable Development Goals, and so that, ultimately, it can carry out that role and respond to the aspirations of millions of people, mostly youth, to live in a better world, in a sustainable, resilient and peaceful environment. The Dominican Republic proposes that all of the proposals discussed here be compiled into a report that is then given to the Secretary-General.

We urge members to lend their support to concrete steps that will allow us to move towards consensus that would include that new dimension in our work, both to improve our understanding of today's conflicts and prevent those of the future.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

May I remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I also wish to inform all concerned that we will be carrying on this open debate through the lunch hour, as we have a long list of speakers.

I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guatemala.

**Ms. Jovel Polanco** (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala congratulates the Dominican Republic on its election to the Security Council, which is a historic event of great consequence when we recall that, as a founding member of our Organization, this is the first time it forms part of the Security Council, and it is doing so as the President. The region's leadership is therefore strengthened by the Dominican Republic creating space for critical dialogue on climate change and its implications for international security and the vulnerability of developing nations to the negative effects of that phenomenon.

I thank the briefers, who provided us with a broader view of the scope of climate change and its impact on issues such as migration, conflicts and international security overall.

Indeed, this Organization was created to maintain international peace and security, which is why Guatemala believes that the United Nations owes it to its Member States to respond in their best interest, without selectivity or vested interests and in respect of their sovereignty.

Over the past 20 years, Guatemala has been one of the countries that has been most affected by greenhouse gases, and we are therefore aware of the serious reality of climate change. That is why we must not ignore the impacts of natural phenomena, especially if they are caused by climate change, with a view to making more effective and efficient decisions to prevent them.

It must also be taken into account that countries like my own are more vulnerable, where people's living conditions have worsened, especially those living poverty and extreme poverty, not only because of the lack of institutional resources to have a rapid response system to mitigate damage and adapt to new conditions, but because of human displacement and the sad vicissitudes that afflict the victims of those anthropogenic events.

We suffered the ravages caused by Hurricane Mitch in 1998, Hurricane Stan in 2005, Tropical Storm Agatha in 2010 and droughts in 2008 and 2009, 2014 and 2015, among other events. Those all showed the unequivocal

level of exposure and vulnerability to which my country, as well as the region, was subjected, which resulted in the irreparable loss of lives and the consequent negative impact on the economy and development opportunities.

As a result, my country has identified and defined strategic actions for the recovery, conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, as well as adaptation and mitigation of climate change. Those include strengthening our institutions and national legislation. To that end, we have a law, a policy and an action plan on climate change. Moreover, territorial planning is linked to development planning and gives special attention to rural areas, risk reduction and orderly urban growth.

Similarly, we have strengthened the office of the national coordinator for disaster reduction, which is the institution in charge of carrying out inter-institutional coordination immediately and efficiently. We have established a national round table for dialogue on national climate change and its environmental impact, whose work focuses on reversing environmental degradation indicators. We are also increasing investment in reforestation and the restoration of forests, given that 33 per cent of our territory is protected, 70 per cent of our energy matrix comes from renewable energy and the country's agricultural profile is in forestry.

However, due to its location and geographic circumstances, Guatemala is highly vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change, despite being one of the countries that emits the least amount of greenhouse gases. Those conditions endanger and limit development owing to the loss of infrastructure, the increase in food insecurity, the reduction in the availability and quality of water, the transmission of disease and soil degradation.

Climate change also leads to forced migration whereby the populations of our countries are forced to seek better living conditions, which makes the issue all the more relevant. As such, it requires comprehensive solutions that take into account the migration cycle.

We are at a critical juncture where it is the responsibility of every world leader to conserve ecosystems, as we are not only talking about sustainable development but also maintaining international peace and security for future generations. We are therefore all called upon not only to support the decisions adopted in important forums, such as the Security Council and the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change, but also to implement their basic agreements.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary.

**Mr. Szijjártó** (Hungary): We appreciate the Dominican Republic's invitation to speak at today's open debate and that the members of the Security Council want to listen to non-Council members speak on this matter as well, considering that there is no doubt that climate change is among the most important challenges facing the international community and should be addressed properly. Climate change will definitely generate fights for resources as access to them becomes increasingly difficult. That is why we consider climate change as a security challenge, as the President very succinctly said in his statement.

Water scarcity, increasing ocean levels, desertification, the decreasing productivity of arable lands and the demographic boom in certain regions will definitely result in additional massive migration flows, even at the inter-continental level, as the Foreign Minister of Guatemala stated earlier. According to estimations and predictions, by 2050 approximately 200 million migrants will have taken to the road owing to environmental causes. We have our experience from Europe. During the three-year period from 2015 to 2017, 3.3 million people submitted requests for asylum, of whom 90 per cent came from 34 countries. In those 34 countries the populations will grow by 26 per cent in the next 10 years, which means an additional 640 million people. That foreshadows further migratory flows. Unfortunately, it has been demonstrated over the past years that migration poses an enormous security threat to the countries of origin, transit and destination. In Europe we have been faced with the security challenges associated with migration over the past couple of years. That is why, based on our experience, we believe that the United Nations and all international organizations should not adopt decisions or documents that encourage further migratory waves or portray migration as a human right or as having only a positive impact.

Instead of encouraging new migratory flows and putting pressure on countries that do not accept accommodating that phenomenon, the international community should do everything possible to tackle the root causes of migration, whether they are political, security-related, economic or environmental. Therefore, we do not agree with the Global Compact for

Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the premise that it should serve as a blueprint according to which all countries should and will serve as origin, transit or destination countries for migration. We do not accept that, and we believe that all countries should have the right to decide whether they want to be one of the latter three, with whom they would like to live and whom they would like to allow to enter their countries. That is why border protection will be the most important factor for ensuring security in the future. If those national rights are not respected, then that can be another root cause leading to further conflicts and security risks. We will also face enormous future security risks caused by the environment and climate change, as the President stated earlier, and we would better off avoiding as many conflicts as possible in the future.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Philippines.

**Mr. Locsin** (Philippines): Humankind is facing the ultimate challenge to the life of the planet and the penultimate challenge to its own survival — the imminent prospect of ecological collapse. That will not be another ice age in the course of nature, but a deadly certainty generated entirely by human activity and inaction. Science proves it. Experience shows it. The increasing ferocity of storms demonstrates its certain advent. Only mumbo jumbo disputes it. The devastating effects of climate change are suffered the most severely in especially vulnerable countries like mine. Sea levels have risen 60 centimetres, more than three times the global average of 19 centimetres. We have 7,107 beautiful islands. We will have much fewer.

Not all those losses will be regretted. We have so many islands and maritime features that they defy effective patrolling. They are havens for massive drug trafficking — the scourge of humankind and the death of nations — as evidenced by the desperate flight of populations from narcoStates. Should global warming not be arrested, 98 per cent of our coral reefs — rich fields for fisheries — will die out by mid-century and becoming extinct by century's end. To be sure, we would welcome the evaporation of territorial disputes when the reefs they concern vanish completely beneath the rising sea, along with the structures built on them. Every cloud has a silver lining. As Typhoon Haiyan powerfully showed, storm surges wipe out coastal communities in a matter of minutes, erasing decades of economic progress and social improvement and leaving perdurable misery in their wake. The 2018

Global Climate Risk Index shows that our country lost an annual average of 1 per cent of our gross domestic product over the past two decades. Climate change has generated civil strife and foreign wars. It will get worse, and there will be more. A new Dark Age will descend on most of the planet never before seen in breadth. Unlike in the past, the darkness will never be lifted. No age of enlightenment will follow. Human life will not be worth living except for brutes, and there are quite a few of those already in countries denying climate change and refusing its challenges.

For less developed countries that trace their privations to the depredations of developed ones, it will be self-destructive retribution. If all humankind cannot have this planet on the same terms, no part of humankind should. Misery quite rightly craves company. It is a kind of justice. We must develop better risk assessment and mitigation strategies for climate-related disasters. Although we emit less than half of 1 per cent of global emissions, the Philippines has put itself firmly on the path to low-carbon development. Far better-off societies will not do so out of greed and self-serving ignorance, but Filipinos are different. Whatever is the right thing for everyone to do, Filipinos will do it, even if no one else does. We have adopted, continued to improve and are actually implementing a comprehensive national disaster risk-reduction and management plan, but climate change knows no boundaries. And every one of us is at the mercy of actions and inaction beyond our borders.

Therefore, stronger synergies among States and deeper international cooperation are imperative. The Humanitarian Assistance Centre of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has strengthened its cooperation in line with the approach of the One ASEAN, One Response. Globally, we are committed to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and, above all, to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We will never see a reason to abandon the latter. In that regard, we share the intelligence of everyone who continues to adhere to it.

The climate-driven conflicts and desperate mass population movements that we see today are what we will see more of tomorrow. No country will be safe. Some can retreat behind walls, but they will not be subsequently able to venture beyond them. Sooner or later, chaos will scale any wall. Countries of wealth and power may have a brief respite from the final catastrophe, but their lives will be extremely

diminished. But those with the intelligence and caring to do something about climate change should not beg for cooperation from those who lack both. In the end, we shall have the sad but real satisfaction of a common fate. We might suggest, however, that the Security Council chisel the climate-change challenge on granite as its first, foremost and last security concern. When the end finally comes and all social bonds are severed, all the conflicts of the past will seem like sports competitions by comparison, and that includes the far more horrendous first two decades of the twenty-first century, which cannot plead ignorance as an excuse, with the horrors of the twentieth still fresh in mind.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on Minister for Foreign Affairs of Maldives.

**Mr. Shahid** (Maldives): I wish to thank the Dominican Republic, which holds the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January, for convening this important debate. I would also like to thank the eminent experts for providing us with valuable insights in their briefings this morning. Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate the newly elected members of the Council — Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia and South Africa, which took up their membership on the Council this month.

As I left the Maldives to travel here, I met a 5-year-old little girl, Aisha, at Malé International Airport. She asked me where I was going and I told her that I was travelling to New York to speak about climate change in the Security Council. We had a little chat and she hugged me and waved me goodbye as I walked away to board my flight.

On my very long flight to New York, I could not stop thinking about the little girl who had embraced me, the bright sparkle in her eyes and the joyous innocence in her smile, unaware of the kind of future that she may have ahead of her. I asked myself: can I really do something meaningful for that little girl? Can we all collectively help her to realize the hopes and dreams that she carries in her young self? Can we deliver her the future to which she aspires and that she deserves — a future that is safe, secure and healthy? Looking at the current state of affairs in the world, I must answer no.

Climate change has been destroying our tiny island country for years. It is eroding our beaches, killing the coral reefs that protect our islands and contaminating our fresh water with sea water, and we are losing our

fish stock. But, most importantly, climate change is going to take our home away from us.

On 17 April 2007, when the Security Council held its first-ever debate on the impact of climate change on peace and security, I spoke in this very Chamber on this very same matter (see S/PV.5663). That day, I reminded the Council that climate change is not only an everyday fact of life for the Maldivians, but also an existential threat. I reminded the Council that a mean sea-level rise of two metres would suffice to virtually submerge the entire Maldives under water. That would indeed be the death of a nation.

Yet today, 12 years later, I am still repeating the same message in the Council. The prospects for our future are far worse than we ever imagined. While we are still trying to decide which forum of the United Nations must address which aspect of climate change, in our countries across the world lakes are drying up, depriving tens of millions of people of fresh water. Unseasonal droughts are leaving millions of people homeless. Hunger and displacement are leading to conflicts, and entire nations are sinking under water. What is a greater security threat than that?

We are encouraged by the Paris Agreement with its aim to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed to that end. We also hope that the Katowice rulebook will help to improve our collective ambition to deliver on our pledges and keep global warming to well below 2°C, or if possible 1.5°C, above pre-industrial levels. However, for the Maldives, waiting and hoping are not enough. We must drastically reverse the current trends in climate change to ensure that a future exists for little girls like Aisha and her friends.

We need solutions that are based on the principles of justice and common but differentiated responsibilities, within respective capabilities, and that are achieved through consensus and national ownership. The solutions we seek should narrow the gap between adaptation and mitigation. A large share of funds must be reserved for adaptation. That will enable countries to build infrastructure to reduce the risks of climate-induced disasters, as envisaged in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The solutions we seek should also aim to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to identify potential climate-related risks in conflicts and to

take mitigating measures early on. The Secretariat's briefings to the Council should, in our opinion, include expert analyses of climate-related risks and how such risks are driving conflicts.

The countries that are on the front line of impact, such as the Maldives, cannot afford to wait. We cannot wait until we can all agree with the facts on the ground: that climate change is a threat to international peace and security. We cannot wait until the impacts of climate-induced disasters destroy our economies and our livelihoods. We cannot wait for climate change to force us to abandon our identity and lose our homes. We need actions that are consistent with the commitments that we have already made. If we do not act, we will extinguish the sparkle in the eyes of Aisha and millions of children like her.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Bocchit Edmond, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Haiti.

**Mr. Edmond** (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Haiti, His Excellency Mr. Jovenel Moïse, and on my own behalf, I would like to wish every success to South Africa, Germany, Belgium, Indonesia and the Dominican Republic, which are serving as non-permanent members of the Security Council for the period 2019-2020. I would also like to congratulate the Dominican Republic, which holds the rotating presidency of the Council, for organizing this open debate on the theme "Addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security" in order to focus everyone's attention on the urgent need to address climate-fragility risks in a sustained manner.

The Government of the Republic of Haiti believes it essential that the international community recognize the significance of climate-related disasters for international peace and security and the importance of implementing a common action plan to counter the threats that they pose.

This open debate is timely because the year 2019 will be marked by important processes to promote the three pillars and the core values of the United Nations through an integrated follow-up to the commitments made at major conferences and meetings in recent years. At the heart of those processes are efforts to ensure the proper and universal implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The debate on climate-related risks is in line with the priorities

recently announced by both the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session and the Secretary-General.

The Republic of Haiti will continue to make its best contribution to all such processes because, ultimately, it is a question of improving living conditions and respecting the dignity of all human beings, bearing in mind the motto "no one should be left behind".

Recurrent climate-related disasters are a major obstacle to sustainable development efforts and a genuine threat to the survival of many countries, in particular small island developing States; hence the increased interest of all such States in the ongoing and future discussions on climate issues. I fully endorse the statement to be delivered by the representative of Belize in its capacity as Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States.

In recent years, severe cyclones have caused untold human suffering and considerable material damage in many parts of the world, particularly in Central America and the small island States of the Caribbean. In general, recovery and reconstruction needs have often exceeded the national capacities of most affected countries.

My country has been hit many times by severe natural disasters, such as Hurricane Matthew in October 2016, which destroyed the livelihoods of virtually all rural populations and undermined the efforts of the Government. We must recognize the share of climate disasters that have hit Haiti's economy hard, destroying a significant part of its infrastructure, exacerbating the country's structural vulnerabilities, placing a heavy burden on economic recovery efforts, aggravating cumulative delays and delaying year after year the prospects for achieving the country's sustainable development goals.

With the support of all stakeholders, the Government today is seeking to invest more in preventing those risks. In search of rapid and sustainable solutions to this phenomenon, President Moïse launched several innovative initiatives as soon as he came to power, including the Caravan of Change. Unfortunately, those initiatives have not yet received sustained financial support from the international community. The President's priority objective is to consolidate democratic institutions, strengthen essential infrastructure, attract job-creating investment and, in general, improve the living conditions of all segments of the population. Unfortunately, we cannot

endorse certain assertions relating to the situation in Haiti in the concept note, in particular the questionable reference to an

“upward trend in malaria cases since 2009 that can be traced back to Haiti” (*S/2019/1, annex, para. 11*).

I strongly encourage all States, together with all the relevant United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, to work constructively to ensure that the adverse effects of climate change are taken into account in an even more responsible manner. The Republic of Haiti is committed to playing its full part in this collective climate action. We reiterate our full support for all efforts leading to the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as the follow-up of commitments made under the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

In conclusion, two elements remain crucial for a responsible and sustainable response to the destructive effects of climate change: the political will of all States and the collaboration of all stakeholders, on the one hand, and the mobilization of adequate financial resources, on the other.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Minister of Environment and Climate of Canada.

**Ms. McKenna** (Canada) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I want to thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation to discuss the impact of climate change on the security of our planet. This is an urgent and essential discussion. I thank the Dominican Republic for taking up this important leadership.

(*spoke in English*)

Climate change is the defining issue of our time. It is an environmental issue, an economic issue and quite clearly one of the greatest security challenges of the twenty-first century, threatening lives and livelihoods of citizens around the world. Like many here today, Canada is working hard to both mitigate the risks of climate change and adapt to its impacts. For Canadians, climate-related natural disasters, wildfires, extreme heat, droughts, rising sea levels, melting ice and thawing permafrost in Canada's north represent not just inconveniences but existential threats, in particular to some of our most vulnerable, including indigenous peoples living in the Arctic and in rural and remote communities. Canada's top military commander recently said that one of the greatest security threats to

Canada is not military, but that of natural disasters, in Canada and around the world.

Countries around the world, especially least developed countries and small island developing States, are feeling great impacts that threaten their very survival. Whether the issue is desertification in parts of Africa, forced migration of vulnerable people creating climate refugees, conflict over water scarcity, or rising sea levels and tropical storms for small island States, the security aspects of climate change are a near and present danger.

As Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed emphasized, climate change should be viewed as one issue in a web of factors that can lead to conflict. As many have emphasized, for the third year in a row, the World Economic Forum, in its *Global Risks Report*, found that world leaders rank climate change and climate-change-related risks as the top risks in the world, higher than large-scale cyberattacks or terrorism.

It is important to emphasize that viewing climate change through a peace-and-security lens does not undermine the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the commitment of countries around the world to take ambitious action domestically to reduce their greenhouse-gas emissions. It complements it by expanding the frame to recognize that climate change is not simply an environmental problem.

For those reasons, Canada is of the firm view that the issue of climate and security must have a clear place in the Council's deliberations. We recognize the Council's leadership through resolutions passed in recent years recognizing the adverse effects of climate change on the stability and security of regions, such as the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel.

To ensure that the Security Council is equipped to continue to play this leadership role, and as recommended by the youth representative this morning, Canada supports the establishment of a new special representative of the Secretary-General on climate and security, as well as the establishment of a hub for the topic within the United Nations system. It is critical that the Security Council better understand climate-related security risks and report on climate risks when analysing a conflict or region.

Complex problems require collective solutions. In climate change we have perhaps one of our most complex problems. We must act together. I want to take

this opportunity to emphasize that Canada, as a country seeking a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the 2021-2022 term, will continue to advocate for results-based solutions in the nexus between climate and peace and security, and as a voice for those countries most affected by climate change, including our hemispheric partners in the Caribbean, and all small island developing States.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Attorney General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Communications and Climate Change of Fiji.

**Mr. Sayed-Khaiyum** (Fiji): I am delighted to be here today to deliver this statement on behalf of the Fijian Prime Minister, Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, who could not be here due to pressing engagements at home.

We thank the Dominican Republic for convening this open debate at the Security Council on the defining challenge of our times — preparing the international community to confront the growing security consequences arising from climate-change-induced natural disasters.

Climate change has transformed our natural world. Extreme weather catastrophes — such as major floods, prolonged droughts, record-shattering heat waves and super-cyclones — and the frequency at which they occur tell us that the natural world has fundamentally changed. Once-in-a-100-years extreme-weather events are being experienced once every 10 years. The gap between extreme weather events is growing smaller. And a single extreme weather event like Tropical Cyclone Winston, which Fiji experienced in 2016 and from which we are still recovering, as it wiped off one third of the value of our gross domestic product in one single event, can also take away the steady progress that we have made in achieving the globally agreed goals. The severe consequences of extreme weather patterns in Fiji and across the world were highlighted repeatedly by our Prime Minister during Fiji's presidency of the twenty-third annual Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Relentless sea-level rise is a threat multiplier to our economies and societies. In 2014, the Fijian Government relocated its first coastal community to safer ground, and subsequently moved another two. Tragically, we are only at the start of the relocation process. Another 43 coastal communities will follow. We will manage

those relocations the best we can, but I want to take this opportunity to stress to the Security Council that such relocations will not happen only domestically but across borders.

I have highlighted this to the Security Council not to make any moral point but to stress that we are too uncomfortably close to a tipping point. We are still in a phase where domestic and cross-border relocations can be managed voluntarily, as Fiji has offered support to host some of our neighbours. However, very soon, they will become forced migrations on a scale that will place severe stress on our societies and international arrangements.

Climate change is leading to loss of arable land and the relocation of people, which will increase and lead to desertification, food and health insecurity and the depletion of our fish stocks and marine resources. It will lead to conflicts. Of course, the effects of climate change, which at the moment is more pronounced in some places than others, will nonetheless be a problem that will ultimately affect us all. We are all vulnerable.

The effects of climate change are a threat to everyone, everywhere — from the disappearing coast lines of Bangladesh to the scorching heat drying out land across sub-Saharan Africa to the worsening flooding in low-lying cities in the United States. It is not just an issue for the Pacific. All of these effects will place far greater stress on individuals, communities and nation States competing for increasingly scarce resources.

Extreme weather patterns make our economies and societies more fragile. We have seen time and again that, when economic and social fragility increase, our institutions suffer — they become more open to manipulation by extremists, corruption, international criminal syndicates and geopolitical opportunists. It makes our borders more porous.

We ask the Security Council and the wider United Nations family to accept that climate-change-induced disasters will continue to fundamentally challenge institutions of national, regional and global governance. And we call on the United Nations to lead and support national and regional efforts to tackle growing security challenges related to climate change.

Fiji has a long and proud tradition of United Nations peacekeeping, which has given Fiji great exposure and training. We thank all the permanent members of the Security Council — the United States of America,

Russia, China, France and the United Kingdom — for helping us to develop our peacekeeping skills. Our Prime Minister has given his go-ahead to use that expertise to develop what is perhaps the world's first response unit that is fully capable of responding with speed, agility and knowledge to climate-induced disasters, in addition to peacekeeping. We acknowledge the assistance of the Australian Government in that regard.

I am grateful for this opportunity to present Fiji's perspective. We look forward to continuing to engage with the Security Council to begin to tackle the growing regional and international security consequences of climate change.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Nicaragua.

**Mr. Oquist Kelley** (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We are pleased to see a sister republic of the Central American Integration System lead the debate. We also congratulate Belgium, Germany, Indonesia and South African on their election to serve as non-permanent members on the Council.

Climate-change disasters have already led to failed States, and even failed societies. That has been the case in the past and is beginning to occur now. Forecasts are catastrophic if we do not take urgent action. Four thousand two hundred years ago, the great civilizations of the Bronze Age all toppled at almost the same due to droughts lasting more than 100 years. In some cases droughts have lasted up to 300 years, such as in the Akkadian empire in Mesopotamia, in the Old Kingdom of Egypt, and the early Minoan civilization in Crete. I wonder if our civilization could survive a 300-year drought, or even a 100-year drought.

Currently, the Sahara Desert is destroying the livelihoods of herders and farmers in conflict, while an Islamist war rages nearby, leaving 15.6 million people in the Sahel affected by a food crisis and generating a dangerous mass migration to the north. Lake Chad has dried by 95 per cent, affecting the population of four countries that face a double crisis of climate change and Boko Haram operations. At the same time, Al-Shabaab operates among the tens of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons in Somalia.

As for the future, if subsistence farming economies continue to collapse, an estimated 20 million refugees

from the Sahel alone are expected by 2050. If Europe does not know what to do with 1 million refugees, it should ponder what it would do with 20 million.

Central America and the Caribbean are among the most vulnerable regions to climate change worldwide. In Mesoamerica, southern Mexico and Central America, there is an increasingly arid dry zone inhabited by 3.6 million subsistence farming families. If there is a climate-related collapse, that economy of approximately 18 million people would swell the slums of the cities of the region or march north to climb over, dig under or pass through any wall they find along the way.

The biggest obstacle to overcome is political will. One indicator is the lack of climate financing. For mitigation and adaptation, the real test will be the replenishment of the Green Climate Fund in 2019. For losses and damages, the only scientific, fair and ethical way is for the countries that have caused the phenomenon to compensate the countries that are suffering the consequences to the extent of their historical and current responsibility, as Nicaraguan President Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra proposed in the message delivered on his behalf to the General Assembly in 2015 (see A/70/PV.23). For those who find that approach very radical, we must remind them that the concept of compensation for damages has been part of all the legal and ethical systems of the world since antiquity. Of course, there are those who find it old-fashioned because they think that survival is too expensive. If small island States that are losing their future are not compensated, there will be no climate justice in world.

To safeguard international peace and security from the impact of climate change we have to decide on what to base our policies — science or greed, the common good of humankind and the planet in the long-term or national economic advantages in the short-term, defending the most vulnerable populations or promoting the selfish economy of endless, limitless and meaningless growth of production, consumption and capital accumulation on a planet with limited resources?

We are 11 years from 2030 and have some decisions to make. There has been some progress. We congratulate Poland on the twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Katowice, but we must implement the Paris Agreement by following through



on the commitments to reduce emissions and provide financing that will enable us to limit global average temperature rise to 1.5°C. The future of our civilization and the ecosystems that are vital to life on Mother Earth depend upon the 1.5°C target. With the climate summit to be convened by the Secretary-General in September, we have an opportunity to launch a genuine and effective movement for survival.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

**Mr. Holte** (Norway): Urgent and unprecedented changes are needed to stop global temperatures from rising over 1.5°C. That was stated in the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued in October 2018. In Secretary-General Guterres' own words, "Climate change is moving faster than we are."

Let me acknowledge the leadership provided by the Dominican Republic, a country from one of the regions most affected by climate-related disasters.

Norway was present at the ministerial level at the Foreign Ministers Meeting of the Caribbean Community, as well as the Summit of the Pacific Island Forum in Nauru. The messages from those meetings were clear: we are being ravaged by climate change. The important Boe Declaration on climate is a key document on the security threats arising from climate change. The evidence of global warming is also obvious in my own region — the Arctic. The magnitude of change in the Arctic is twice the global increase. It will have profound local, regional and global implications.

The relationship between climate change, peace and security is complex. Climate change is seldom a direct cause of conflict, but it works as a threat multiplier. Annually, 26 million people are displaced by natural disasters. Global economic losses from extreme weather events are up 250 per cent over the past 20 years. By 2030, more than 100 million people could be driven into extreme poverty by climate change.

The consequences are often different for women than for men. Therefore, our response must be gender responsive.

Climate change not only aggravates existing tensions and provides fertile grounds for conflict. It can seriously destabilize economies, nurture political extremism and — in some cases — threaten the very existence of a country, in particular small island developing States. It also seriously undermines

our joint global efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The climate-security nexus merits, in our view, being firmly placed on the Council's agenda. It is also a priority for Norway, as a candidate country for a non-permanent seat in the Council. Norway also supports the initiative to appoint a United Nations special representative for climate and security.

With regard to combating climate change, I see three major lines of defence. The Paris Agreement must remain our first line of defence. The Secretary-General's climate summit in September this year should focus on enhancing ambitions. Secondly, assisting vulnerable countries in building their resilience to natural disasters and adapting to the impacts of climate change should be our second line of defence, and something that we need to focus much more on. Our third line of defence should be integrating the climate-security nexus into development and security policies.

Climate action is perhaps the indisputable case to be made for multilateralism. You cannot go it alone. It is simply not an option. We therefore warmly welcome the joint initiative of Germany and Nauru to establish the Group of Friends on Climate and Security.

Amidst difficulty lies opportunity. Estimates show that bold action against climate change could yield a direct economic gain of \$26 trillion through 2030, as compared with doing business as usual. Furthermore, the ongoing renewable energy transition, or should I say revolution, is likely to reduce the number of energy-related conflicts.

The next 10 to 15 years are a "unique use it or lose it" moment in history. There is great urgency. In a crisis time is always the enemy. As a consistent partner, Norway is committed to doing its share for our common future.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia.

**Mr. Teesalu** (Estonia): Allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the Dominican Republic, this month's President of the Security Council, for convening an open debate on such a highly relevant topic.

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

Climate change has severe security implications. We are clearly seeing the existential threat it poses to the very survival of many small island developing States. Knowledge surrounding the threat of climate change to small island developing States and other low-lying coastal areas dates as far back as 1990, but we have yet to take concrete steps to change the course of these developments. The accumulation of the effects of climate-related disasters will inevitably have a direct impact on people's livelihoods, which will be especially devastating in already fragile areas.

The slow onset sea-level rise may seem like something in the distant future, when in fact the devastating impacts of climate change are already felt today. For instance, in the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel region, the effects of climate change are multipliers of poverty, instability, hunger and violence.

Recent scientific data show that the effects of climate change are taking place much faster than previously thought. The world's leading climate scientists have warned that only a dozen years remain for global warming to be kept to a maximum of 1.5°C. In order to effectively respond to security threats, we need to strengthen climate resilience, disaster preparedness and disaster response. That can be achieved only through coordinated action, both on a domestic as well as on an international level.

My country, Estonia, has traditionally not been at the forefront of major climate disasters, but shifting climate patterns have lately had a considerable effect on our agriculture and forestry sectors. As a response to that, we are developing expertise on how to combat forest fires, and we are supporting similar projects in the region. Even though such cooperation projects might provide only a small-scale example, they still illustrate very well how the experience we are gaining by increasing resilience to climate change impacts can benefit our partners in enhancing their own resilience.

Climate change and its effects are without a doubt extremely complex, which in turn means that we need to strive for a holistic approach and comprehensive strategic planning to ensure our preparedness for such effects. It is essential to make continuous efforts to integrate climate change across sectors in national and regional planning. To ensure ownership and the full implementation of such plans, all interest groups of society need to be included in the process, including especially women and youth.

Furthermore, the linkages between climate change and poverty, food, water and energy security, migration and conflict need to be made more explicit in order to influence national policy agendas. In this regard, the Security Council can and should take a more systematic approach to considering the climate-change factor as a cause of and multiplier in conflict situations. Estonia fully supports the Secretary-General's focus on prevention. In this regard, taking into account and including a focus on the negative effects of climate change in Security Council-mandated missions can make a difference in the outcome of conflict-resolution processes.

Finally, we in Estonia, being at the forefront of innovation and digitalization of the society, believe that climate resilience is an area in which the tools of modern technology can be used, as proved by early-warning systems. Our long-term strategy foresees promoting the development of innovative technologies, products and services that reduce emissions. We aim to invest more in new solutions that support a low-carbon and more energy-efficient and climate-resilient world. Our cooperation efforts focus especially on the situation of the most endangered countries: the least developed ones. We are proud also to be contributors to and collaborators in projects that enhance responsiveness and adaptation to climate change in the Pacific small island developing States.

In conclusion, allow me to assure the Council that Estonia is fully committed to the fight against global climate change. This will also be one of Estonia's priorities should we be elected to the Security Council for the period 2020-2021. We firmly believe that it is our responsibility to take effective action to combat climate change, including its direct implications for peace and security.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

**Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein): This open debate brings necessary attention to the key issue of our time. Since the first discussion of this issue in this Chamber, in 2007 (see S/PV.5663), Member States have become increasingly aware of the fact that climate change is a driver of insecurity and a threat multiplier for conflict, as well as a threat to our collective security.

Although there are other United Nations organs with the competence to address climate change, including the Economic and Social Council and the General

Assembly, it is essential that the Council engage to address the international and transnational threat that climate change poses to peace and security. One cannot fully address the root causes of conflict or take on the mantle of prevention emphasized by the Secretary-General without acknowledging our changing climate.

We are pleased that the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been invited to brief the Council today and encourage strengthened coordination with other United Nations bodies with responsibility for addressing climate change. We also hope that the Council will continue to advocate for enhanced analysis and information on climate issues.

We are pleased to see that the Security Council has begun to integrate climate issues into its country and region-specific work, building on the precedent set in resolution 2349 (2017), on West Africa and the Sahel. In areas such as the Lake Chad basin, where 90 per cent of the economy relies on agriculture and pastoralism, it is self-evident that a deteriorating climate will negatively affect peace and security, exacerbating vulnerability than can be exploited by malicious actors and driving mass displacement.

We also welcome the Council's inclusion of similar language addressing climate in its resolutions covering the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, Mali, Somalia and Darfur. But more can be done on these issues: in addition to mandating Governments and the United Nations to address the effects of climate change, the Council should also encourage measures to prevent and mitigate its effects as a root cause of conflict itself. The Security Council should also specifically address marginalized groups such as women and young people, who will be particularly vulnerable to the detrimental effects of climate change, for example due to a lack of educational and employment opportunities.

In situations such as those in Libya, South Sudan, Yemen and Syria, climate change has exacerbated the severity of man-made conflict by increasing extreme weather patterns. We hope that the Council will be able to mainstream its consideration of climate in its resolutions while at the same time maintaining a focus on those responsible for causing and perpetrating these conflicts.

Looking forward, we are also aware that our changing climate may create conditions for conflict in areas that so far have been peaceful. The melting

of Arctic summer ice creates incentives for increased contestation over resources, the extraction of which will further exacerbate climate change and spur further degradation of the Arctic environment. The increased attention to the region poses challenges for regional institutions, including the Arctic Council. We should also mention the impact of competition for resources on the indigenous peoples of the Arctic region, whose relationship with their historic lands, territories and resources should be respected.

For many States Members of the United Nations, in particular small island developing States, climate change is an existential threat. Its effects — mass displacement and loss of homes and livelihoods — echo the outcomes of those armed conflicts that the Security Council addresses in its daily work. Given this reality, the Council should treat climate change as a direct threat to our global collective security.

Finally, all action on climate change must be underpinned by our resolute commitment to multilateralism, epitomized by the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We must take the spirit of that Agreement forward and work together ambitiously to create effective and sustainable solutions.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): As there remain 51 speakers on the list, I take this opportunity to remind representatives to limit their statements to three or, at a maximum, four minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

**Mr. Bessho** (Japan): I thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this debate. I also wish to thank the briefers for their valuable input.

Japan, during its presidency of the Security Council in December 2017, hosted a discussion (see S/PV.8144) addressing the complex contemporary challenges, including climate change and natural hazards, to international peace and security.

As we stated during that discussion, in order for the Security Council to more effectively address complex challenges, the Council needs to increase its focus on the whole conflict cycle, namely, preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict.

At the same time, attention should be paid to the fact that peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian elements are closely interlinked. Climate

risks, including disasters, which can act as a threat multiplier, are increasing in small island developing States and least developed countries, inter alia. Japan itself experienced record torrential rain last July, as Mr. Kabat mentioned in his briefing.

Accordingly, the importance of adaptation measures is also increasing. From that perspective, Japan is leading the discussion on climate-change adaptation within the framework of the Group of 20. We have also contributed directly to building societies that are resilient to climate-related risks through continued assistance to developing countries, including through climate-change impact assessments and climate-risk information development.

Japan, itself a disaster-prone country, has been committed to mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into the international arena, including guiding the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as well as through various forms of tangible and intangible assistance made under the Sendai Cooperation Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction.

What is most important in this context is for each Government to make disaster risk reduction a policy priority, introduce the disaster risk reduction perspective into all development policies and expand investment in this area. Collective efforts under such policies, including continued discussion, resource mobilization and planning and implementing measures to address emerging risks, can lead to the realization of a resilient society.

We believe that such efforts, as supported by global awareness on disaster-risk reduction, can eventually contribute to international peace and security. In that regard, we welcome today's debate. Let me express our continued commitment to contributing to the discussion on these related issues, including at the United Nations, in a positive and constructive manner.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Greece.

**Mrs. Theofili** (Greece): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's highly relevant and timely debate.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union and would like to add the following remarks.

The latest scientific data suggest that climate change poses rapidly increasing risks to natural ecosystems, human health, food security and economic development. Indeed, its effects are no longer a distant eventuality, but a present reality. In my own country, Greece, and throughout the Mediterranean region, catastrophic forest fires, diminishing water resources and increasingly prolonged seasonal floods pose a serious threat to the vital agriculture, fisheries and tourism industries. The increasing magnitude and frequency of extreme weather events not only create new threats, but also further aggravate existing social and cross-border tensions. Clearly, no country is immune to the direct and indirect consequences of climate change, and therefore their mitigation necessitates enhanced multilateral cooperation. In that vein, Greece has signed and ratified all the important conventions on climate change and the environment. At the same time, we actively participate in ongoing negotiations and supports ambitious efforts by the European Union to address the long-term security implications of climate change.

We believe that the recently reformed, nimble architecture of the United Nations, with its emphasis on long-term analysis, cross-cutting effects and a novel, holistic approach to international security, is uniquely equipped to address those challenges. Our first priority should be to improve shared knowledge and situational awareness on climate-related security risks, before consistently factoring them into our early-warning and conflict-prevention mechanisms. Strengthening and aligning the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be a crucial first step in that direction.

In the future, our ability to anticipate and adapt to security threats created by climate change may be equally important to our long-term efforts to reverse it. In that context, we look forward to this year's climate summit to be hosted by the Secretary-General. Inaction is not an option.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Latvia.

**Mr. Pildegovičs** (Latvia): I thank the Dominican Republic, as President of the Security Council, for organizing today's debate. The perspective of your country, Sir, as it is directly affected by climate change, gives us a particular sense of urgency. I also thank all of the briefers for their useful updates in that regard.

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

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, faced by all countries. Undoubtedly, it also affects geopolitical stability and security, while acting as a threat multiplier, especially for the most vulnerable regions — in some cases reinforcing the conflicts. Climate-related disasters threaten populations and the stability of whole regions, particularly countries in Central America and the Caribbean, as well as South, Central and South-East Asia. We are well aware of the particular vulnerability of many small island developing States to climate change and sea-level rise.

Latvia fully welcomes the fact that the Security Council is discussing the issue. We believe that climate-related security risks should be mainstreamed in the Council's conflict-prevention and peacebuilding efforts. Deepening our understanding of the implications of climate change on international security will help countries and individuals to step up climate action. We also applaud the Secretary-General for his strong commitment to putting climate change high on the United Nations agenda, in particular this year in preparation for the United Nations climate summit in September.

The effects of climate change are becoming increasingly evident and more severe. Last summer, we again witnessed record-breaking heat all around the world. Like other countries, Latvia is experiencing the effects of climate change. Records of average air temperature in Latvia show a long-term trend of warming. Every storm causes flooding and great distress to the people living in coastal regions. And the threat of coastal erosion along the Baltic Sea could intensify in the future. Only with joint multilateral efforts and cooperation is it possible to combat climate change by reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and building resilience and through better preparedness for the negative impacts of climate change, including more frequent climate-related disasters.

Climate action has a clear interlinkage with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Latvia is strongly convinced that reaching the Sustainable Development Goals is the ultimate prevention agenda, as they address the drivers and root causes of instability and conflict. Therefore, investing in human dignity, eradicating poverty, fostering climate resilience and promoting economic

and social progress will reduce the incidence of conflict, instability and despair.

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change provides clear guidance on what we must do before it is too late. Latvia is fully committed to the long-term goals of the Agreement. Latvia's obligations will be to implement the commitment made by the European Union's nationally determined contribution to collectively reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by at least 40 per cent by 2030 as compared to 1990. Latvia is now working on its National Long-term Low-carbon Development Strategy 2050 and its National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change 2030. Moreover, Latvia is developing a detailed national energy and climate plan for the period 2021-2030. At the regional level, Latvia, currently holds the presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and prioritizes dialogue and cooperation in the field of climate adaptation and low-emission development. We will promote the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement in that framework. We will also focus on the pollution problems of the Baltic Sea. Chemical pollution and plastic waste have emerged as one of the growing threats to the Baltic Sea basin ecosystem over the past decade, which calls for an immediate solution.

Latvia strongly believes that mitigation and adaptation to climate change, especially finding concrete solutions, is a common responsibility at all levels. However, it is crucial to build trust among various stakeholders, especially to send a strong signal to the private sector to advance innovation and investment in the green economy. That will require many changes in sectoral policies, and, above all, in people's mindset.

Last December, the United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Katowice, Poland, adopted a balanced package of decisions. It is our urgent task to fully implement them in order to operationalize the Paris Agreement. Now, in anticipation of the United Nations climate action summit, to quote the Secretary-General, "We are at a defining moment". We truly are, and the survival of our planet is at stake. This is an issue we must all care about deeply. We must act for the sake of future generations.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

**Mr. Stefanile** (Italy): Italy welcomes today's debate.

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

Today's discussion follows a series of meetings of various kinds organized by Security Council members since 2007 on the relationship between climate and security. Italy has constantly contributed to that dynamic by regularly attending the meetings and by promoting, during its last term on the Council in 2017, an Arria Formula meeting on the security implications of rising temperatures. Therefore, we very much appreciate the initiative of the Dominican Republic, which ensures continuity in the discussion and confirms that an increasing number of Member States are determined to keep the attention of the Security Council on a topic of the utmost relevance.

As stated by the Secretary-General, climate change is the defining issue of our time, and also a direct existential threat to humankind and our planet. We are already witnessing the increasingly destabilizing consequences of climate change and climate-related disasters in vast areas of the world, from the Sahel to Central America and the Caribbean, from South-East Asia to the Pacific, as well as in the Mediterranean region. Hurricanes, droughts, sea-level rise and extreme weather conditions can be considered new forms of a natural hybrid threats to global security due to their devastating effects on access to water and food, health conditions and socioeconomic development in an increasing number of countries.

Some members of the international community, such as the countries of the Sahel, the Lake Chad basin and the small island developing States, are especially vulnerable to climate change, and therefore more exposed to fragility risks. But the consequences of climate-related disasters in terms of humanitarian crises, destabilization, resource-driven conflicts, forced displacement and migration flows have an immediate, direct impact on the security of the entire planet.

The first dimension for intervention by the international community obviously relates to prevention and mitigation. Reducing the impact of climate-related disasters will largely depend on our capacity to contain global emissions within the targets of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Notwithstanding the progress made at the twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties, held in Katowice, Poland, much remains to be done to achieve that crucial goal. The high-level meeting promoted by the President of the General Assembly to be held on 28 March and the climate summit to be convened by the Secretary-General on 23 September

will be instrumental in intensifying and accelerating international action at all levels.

At the same time, it is essential to strengthen global efforts in terms of adaptation, disaster prevention and emergency preparedness. The main policy document in that field is the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Italian Government is fully engaged in supporting its effective implementation.

Italy is a high-risk country itself, exposed to frequent earthquakes, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions and other dramatic events. Given that high vulnerability, Italy has developed strong expertise in civil protection activities. We are eager to share that expertise and are actively engaged in supporting local and international partners to build and develop national capacities in response to natural disasters.

As far as Africa is concerned, we operated in response to El Niño in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Malawi, Eswatini and Zimbabwe. In the Sahel area, Italy is strongly supporting the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. Next Monday in Rome, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, we will launch the new Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development to facilitate assistance projects on food security, clean water and energy.

Italy has also established innovative partnerships with the Pacific small island developing States, the Caribbean Community and the Alliance of Small Island States countries, with a focus on reinforcing national capacities on climate-related issues.

While being mindful of the contents and characteristics of its mandate, we believe that the Security Council should also play its part and systematically incorporate the security dimension of climate-related impacts in its analysis and deliberations, including on country-specific situations, in coordination with the wider United Nations system.

We have before us a global and multidimensional challenge. All the relevant international actors and institutions, as well as national authorities and the private sector, must therefore adopt a coordinated and inclusive approach to provide the most effective response.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

**Mr. Imran Khan** (Pakistan): Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. We extend our special thanks to Foreign Minister Miguel Vargas Maldonado for presiding over the meeting. I also extend our thanks to the briefers for giving us insight on the issue.

Today's meeting is a manifestation of the importance that we all attach to the issue of climate change. As the single-biggest challenge the world faces today, climate change is indeed a defining issue of our time. The sheer scale of the problem has the potential to dictate the future of our discussions, business and financial flows and, above all, the way we live.

Climate change is a threat multiplier for Pakistan. Besides the tragic human and material costs, climate-induced threats impede our ability to achieve national priorities, promote sustainable development and growth and ensure economic prosperity for our people. It is also a dilemma of our time that the ones who have contributed the least to climate change are suffering the most. For example, Pakistan's per capita emission of greenhouse gases is one of the lowest in the world, yet we are the eighth most vulnerable country in the world. We are home to one of the world's oldest civilizations, which developed around great rivers, and yet, as a lower-riparian State, we are suffering from a water-stressed situation, which has the potential to devastate the breadbasket of not just Pakistan but the whole of South Asia.

Climate-induced threats to the peace and security of our planet are no secret. The Council has been discussing them since 2007. The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report also acknowledges that climate-related risks to human security will increase with global warming. The question is how to deal with that to avoid conflicts. We believe addressing the root causes of climate change is the solution, as by merely curing the symptoms we cannot cure the disease.

Over decades we have developed principles and frameworks supported by scientific evidence. Now it is time for action. Collectively, we must strengthen exchanges and cooperation to respond to climate change and provide assistance to developing countries through technology transfers, capacity-building and financing.

We believe that discussions on climate change must acknowledge the long-established principles developed under the relevant conventions, the most important of which is the United Nations Framework Convention on

Climate Change. Lastly, we also believe that actions on this issue should be undertaken under the confines of the mandates of the relevant bodies.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations.

**Archbishop Auza**: The Holy See thanks the presidency of the Dominican Republic for convening this open debate on addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security. The Secretary-General has said that climate change is the defining issue of our time and that we are presently at a defining moment. That is why this debate is so timely.

Climate-related disasters affect all countries, rich and poor alike. We are witnessing the effects of extreme weather conditions across the world, from the Caribbean to the Pacific. In the past year, immense distress and suffering caused by heavy rains, flooding, fires, earthquakes and drought have struck the inhabitants of different regions of world, including the Americas, South-East Asia and South Asia, among others.

Apart from the tragic loss of life caused by such extreme climactic changes and the massive financial costs that such disasters entail, greater sensitivity and proactivity are needed to prevent conflicts that all too frequently ensue as national and regional stability are affected due to a lack of access to food and clean water and their inevitable impact on the movement of peoples, sometimes leading to both forced and protracted displacement.

Suffice it to recall how tensions increase because of the seasonal phenomenon of transhumance, as discord between farmers and pastoralists vying for limited or diminishing resources is aggravated, and in some instances becomes a further factor that causes instability. In the Lake Chad basin, for example, which has long provided a source of life in the desert for millions of people, we are faced, because of ongoing regional conflicts and the threat of extremist expansion, with refugees and internally displaced populations struggling to find water, to say nothing of the impact on fishing, further compounding poverty and leaving already extremely vulnerable populations in even more desperate conditions.

If indeed extreme climate disasters are indiscriminate, such examples show that the poorest

pay the highest cost. According to recent studies, those in poorer countries are five times more likely to be displaced by extreme weather than their counterparts in wealthier nations. We must act urgently.

Immediate action is needed not only to prevent the manifold consequences of rising temperatures in our common home, but also to hold off peace and security concerns from preventable climate disasters. Those actions are part of the ecological conversion that Pope Francis is strongly encouraging the international community, and each one of us, to undergo.

This open debate is an opportunity to take a hard look at some of these problems and offer ambitious, coherent and action-oriented solutions that show respect for the planet and concern for the integral development of all. Speaking to diplomats accredited to the Holy See at the start of this new year, Pope Francis expressed his hope for a more decisive commitment on the part of States to strengthen cooperation to urgently combat the worrisome phenomenon of global warming.

In that regard, the support of the international community is urgent for favouring the development of infrastructure, the growth of prospects for future generations and the emancipation of the most vulnerable sectors of society, lest they be forced to fight for food and wage war for water because of our failure to act.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Park Chull-Joo** (Republic of Korea): At the outset, allow me to thank you, Sir, for convening today's open debate. I also thank the four briefers for their briefings. Regarding today's topic of debate, the Republic of Korea would like to highlight the following three points.

First, it is crucial for the Security Council to comprehend the security implications of climate change in a systematic fashion and in line with our efforts to strengthen preventive diplomacy. Indeed, a comprehensive approach to the fundamental causes of conflicts lies at the very centre of preventive diplomacy. In countries such as small island developing States climate change itself poses the most significant threat to security. Elsewhere, it is becoming increasingly clear that climate change, interacting with other factors, is creating and pushing regional instability into full-blown conflicts and humanitarian crises, as has been reported in situations such as those in the Lake Chad

basin and the Sahel. In many cases, there are limits to devising fundamental solutions to such situations without considering the security implications of climate change.

Secondly, in order to stop climate change from further escalating into security challenges, we need a comprehensive response from the United Nations system as a whole. Climate change is the fundamental cross-cutting issue of our time. However, the current United Nations system is fragmented. As such, there is a need for the United Nations to deepen collaboration and coordination in responding to the multifaceted security aspects of climate change. Last week, in his briefing to the General Assembly in an informal session, Secretary-General Guterres rightly pointed out that climate change is one of the United Nations foremost priorities this year. The Security Council should be no exception to this system-wide effort. My delegation is of the view that the joint meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Economic and Social Council last year concerning climate change's impact on the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel region was a meaningful effort in that regard. The Republic of Korea, as the current President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services, will endeavour to strengthen cooperation with other actors in order to facilitate integrated discussions on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. In that regard, this week at the Executive Board we held an in-depth interactive dialogue on poverty eradication, including climate-related poverty, and approaches to strengthening ties between development and humanitarian assistance.

Thirdly, the relevant Security Council's discussions should lead to tangible results. We note presidential statement S/PRST/2011/15, of 2011, which requests the Secretary-General to include information on the security implications of climate change in his reports to the Security Council. We also draw the Council's attention to last year's presidential statement S/PRST/2018/3, which emphasizes the need for climate-risk analysis and a management strategy for such risks in the Sahel region. We hope to continue discussions on concrete ways to see follow-up measures.

In order to prevent climate crises from further spiralling into threats to peace and security, international cooperation and support for vulnerable



countries are crucial. It is necessary to simultaneously provide support for both development and governance capabilities, alongside support for climate adaptation. To that end, the Republic of Korea will continue to actively participate in international cooperation and support efforts.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

**Mr. Sandoval Mendiola** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico thanks the Dominican Republic for convening this open debate on such a relevant topic on the international agenda. As the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change recently pointed out, working to combat climate change is synonymous with working to preserve the human species.

The scientific evidence contained in the fall 2018 special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is clear, forceful and alarming. Increasing our resolve is key to tackling the phenomenon, and our current efforts are falling short. We are very far from meeting the goal of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. In recent years, combating climate change has consistently been, and will continue to be, a national and international priority for the Government of Mexico. Since the sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP16), held in Cancún, Mexico, where we laid the groundwork for all our current understandings, we opted for a binding, ambitious and dynamic regime, which is embodied today in the Paris Agreement, with the Framework Convention as the main international intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change. In that regard, Mexico supports and thanks the Secretary-General for holding a high-level meeting on climate change this year.

It is important to analytically distinguish among the causes and scope of the phenomenon in order to identify the relevant agencies within the United Nations system able to confront them and consequently ensure that our efforts are truly coherent, coordinated, effective and efficient. It is imperative that the Security Council voice its concern about this critical issue, and we hope that it will reaffirm that, in that regard, the Framework Convention is the proper venue for coordinating actions to address its causes and effects across its mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, climate financing, technology transfer and capacity-building pillars.

The best way to ward off the risks associated with climate change is to deal with its structural causes and vulnerability factors. To that end, we must adhere to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which translates into building resiliency and fostering international cooperation. The issues that come up in discussions on the link between climate change and security generally reflect the effects of the former, many of which are related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including such development challenges as displacement, migration, food security, water scarcity, energy production and pandemics, among others. In other words, the indirect effects of climate change on populations constitute a threat to international peace and security and are risk factors with regard to the emergence and the exacerbation of conflicts. We must, however, recognize that, although the phenomenon increases vulnerability, it is not the underlying cause of the institutional and structural fragility experienced by many countries. It is not a matter of reconfiguring an approach to combat climate change into one ensuring security, but rather of recognizing its devastating effects, which are intensifying on a daily basis, while affecting international relations and security.

The discussion on the links between the effects of climate change and security must always be based on the context-specific context of countries and regions. We therefore believe that, in order to provide them with comprehensive and adequate attention, the effects of climate change must be included as part of risk analyses carried out by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs on a case-by-case basis, while maintaining an incremental approach based on sustainable development and vulnerability.

No part of the planet is immune from the impact of extreme climate events, hence the imperative need to improve the mechanisms and methods to successfully manage the risks they represent and avoid them. Fortunately, such analyses have begun to be included in the mandates of some peacekeeping operations that recognize the effects of climate change as risk factors. The application of such an approach would be welcome in reviewing various conflicts on the Council's agenda so that it becomes part of the analytical resources underpinning the decision-making process of the Security Council and with regard to peacebuilding.

In that regard, the sustaining peace approach offers a broad, necessary and totally relevant paradigm shift to approaching this issue. It is precisely peace, not

conflict, that must be the reference point for prevention and the motivator for the use of all the resources and tools available to foster peaceful societies that benefit from sustainable development, including resiliency to climate change. The best way to respond to its impacts is therefore to meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development so as to achieve sustainable and inclusive development that leaves no one behind.

Before considering making this topic a standing agenda item of the Security Council, we must have reliable and rigorous analytical tools that inform and support the decisions of the Security Council and can therefore incorporate such a perspective. A clear division of labour within the United Nations system is the best way forward to address the impact of climate change on international peace and security.

Based on all that I have just said, it is vital that, as one of the principal organs of the Organization, the Security Council reaffirm its role as a contributor to the harmonized efforts of the entire system, not as a body that deals with that link alone or in isolation. In the same vein, the work of the Security Council should take advantage of and be appropriately complemented by the tools and processes for addressing cross-cutting issues on the agenda of the Organization, such as migration, food security and disaster risk reduction, among others.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

**Mr. Cheshire** (New Zealand): I would like to thank the Dominican Republic for convening this important debate. At the outset, New Zealand aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Nauru on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

In September last year, the leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum affirmed that climate change presented the single greatest threat to the livelihood, security and well-being of Pacific people. Our leaders chose their words deliberately. Climate change is not a future challenge to be endlessly discussed; it is a real and immediate threat.

The Security Council has recognized the demonstrable links between climate change and security. When the effects of climate change intersect with environmental and social issues, it drives instability and conflict. The issues outlined in the concept note for this debate (S/2019/1, annex) are the reality for the States of our region.

In the Pacific, climate-related disasters are increasing, as they are across the world. Cyclones, storm surges and droughts are increasing the vulnerability of communities across the region and threatening hard-won development.

The Pacific States are also already feeling the effects of slow-onset disasters. Sea-level rise is the most obvious risk to low-lying atoll countries, but the warming ocean, ocean acidification and salt pollution of freshwater supplies and agricultural soils are just some of the many compounding challenges that climate change brings to our region.

Climate change has already caused some people to migrate, so far mostly within their countries. There is no prospect of return for communities that have been forced to abandon their lands to the advancing sea. Such displacements are not anomalies; they are our collective future if the current trends continue.

As part of the Security Council's efforts to prevent conflict, the threats to international peace and security caused by climate change should be identified and responded to as they emerge. New Zealand firmly supports the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure a more coordinated and integrated response to the impact of climate change. To help to bring additional coordination and focus to the efforts across the United Nations system, we stand in full support of the proposal by Pacific small island developing States for the appointment of a high-level representative for climate change.

Furthermore, we join others who have spoken today and encourage the Secretariat to enable the Council to comprehensively address such threats by including relevant analysis and risk assessments on the impact of climate change in all reports submitted to the Security Council. As the Secretary-General has said, climate change is the defining issue of our time. It is a threat to livelihoods, a threat to well-being and a threat to international peace and security.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

**Mr. Akbaruddin** (India): Climate change is an unprecedented challenge to global civilization. We therefore thank you, Mr. President, for providing an opportunity to articulate views on specific aspects of this overarching issue. We also thank the briefers for their perspectives.

India believes that climate action should be a priority area for international cooperation. Global institutions should be responsive to felt human needs, including disaster preparedness, as well as resilience and response in the face of disasters. Such phenomena tend to threaten human well-being. In addition, as we have heard today, in some cases, such as rising sea levels, the integrity of States is at stake, even in the absence of violence and conflict.

On the other hand, from a policy perspective, as the chapter on human security in the fifth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change summarized: “The evidence on the effect of climate change and variability on violence is contested.” Thus, while climate risks are evident in some specific cases, research findings on the generalized linkages between climate disasters and security remain ambiguous.

The nexus between climate change and security is complex, contingent and still contested. As practitioners wanting to address such matters through international cooperation, we therefore face dilemmas. I will highlight three of the many irksome issues in that regard.

First, can climate security be achieved through the quick fix of securitization of climate change to address climate-related disasters? International peace and security considerations often trump other considerations. Defining a problem as a security challenge therefore often increases the attention and resources devoted to addressing it. Securitizing climate change may help to heighten public awareness but securitization also has significant downsides. A securitized approach risks pitting States into a competition, when cooperation is clearly the most productive avenue in tackling this threat. Thinking in security terms usually engenders overly militarized solutions to problems that inherently require non-military responses to resolve them. In short, it brings the wrong actors to the table. As the saying goes, if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

Secondly, are climate-related disasters amenable to processes and solutions used to tackle threats to international peace and security? To put it another way, can mitigation and adaptation strategies be fulfilled through enforcement action? Can those that cite counter-terrorism and non-proliferation actions by the Council as pathways for punitive measures explain which are “the others” to be held accountable

for climate disasters? Will it be those that do not fulfil their nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement? Will those that do not provide the committed climate financing be forced to provide such support or will inconvenient truths be sidestepped?

Thirdly, can the needs of climate justice be served by shifting climate law-making from the inclusive United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to decision-making by a structurally unrepresentative organization? The disruptive spillover of such a change, made through a mere decision of the Council, on the UNFCCC processes and the Paris Agreement, as well as on the other multilateral organs currently engaged in cooperatively tackling climate change, and indeed on multilateral law-making, is real.

We weigh in favour of a cautionary approach on this contested subject. India supports a path that promotes cooperation to achieve our common goal of preventing and addressing serious disasters linked to climate change. To address such issues, we need to collaborate on climate actions, consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

**Mr. Santos Maraver** (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Dominican Republic, a country that, as both an island State and a Caribbean country, is exposed to climate-related natural disasters, for organizing this debate. The Dominican Republic has a long and rich tradition of environmental policies. Its experience therefore contributes to promoting the need for the Security Council to incorporate the climate dimension into its peace and security strategy, in particular in the context of strengthening its preventive function.

As is well known, Spain is a country very vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. That is why we attach great importance to considering the effects of climate change on the maintenance of international peace and security. We promoted this debate during our recent term in the Security Council, in 2015 and 2016, when we co-organized Arria Formula meetings with Malaysia and Angola and promoted a briefing on desertification with Egypt. We have noted with satisfaction the attention that the Council has devoted to the issue in recent years.

Scientific evidence warns us repeatedly, most recently in the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, of the intolerable effects that rising temperatures will have in the form of uncontrollable natural disasters, persistent droughts, irreparable destruction of natural habitats and rises in sea level that many cannot bear. In turn, those changes seriously compromise food security, access to drinking water, and the health of billions of people — changes that could force massive migratory movements. In short, climate change has the capacity to generate serious political, economic and social repercussions that will inevitably affect international peace and stability. There is an urgent need to act, and to do so in the area of security.

Spain has made the fight against climate change one of its national priorities. The creation of a Ministry for Ecological Transition clearly expresses our firm commitment to addressing the effects of climate change, and the need for a complete transformation of our system in order to adapt it to the requirements of true sustainable development. In that context, last week, the President of the Government of Spain announced an energy and climate plan that will mobilize €235 billion over the next 10 years.

But we are aware that national efforts are useless if they are not combined with essential international cooperation. It is with that conviction that, here at Headquarters, Spain joined the Carbon Neutrality Coalition, which is committed to the net elimination of emissions by 2050. And it is with the same conviction that we await with anticipation the climate summit to be convened by the Secretary-General.

We support the introduction of climate issues into the deliberations of the Security Council. To confine climate change to the realm of sustainable development, or to ignore that it is a multiplier of the factors of instability, would show a serious lack of responsibility. The Council needs to equip itself with a system of risk assessment and strategies that integrate the impact of climate change into its analysis and into conflict prevention and peacekeeping.

Spain has incorporated the relationship between climate and stability in its national security strategy approved in 2017, which expressly states that “the effects of climate change function as structural causes of armed conflicts”. In short, it affirms the intrinsic relationship between climate and security. If this reality

is getting its due at the national level with greater justification and urgency, it should also have it at the multilateral level that the Security Council represents.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

**Mr. Parenti**: The candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union (EU) commends the Dominican Republic for its initiative of holding an open debate on the important issue of the impact of climate-related disasters on international peace and security. The presidency of the Dominican Republic, which is a small island development State, adds a very important perspective to our discussion.

As Mr. Steiner noted this morning, in its recently published *2019 Global Risks Report*, the World Economic Forum asserted that environmental and climate-related concerns account for three of the top five risks by likelihood, and four by impact, which corroborates the findings set forth in the most recent special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, entitled *Global Warming of 1.5°C*, on the magnitude of the challenges the international community is facing. The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on food security, ecosystems, livelihoods, water supplies and key economic sectors such as agriculture are grave in many parts of the world. Climate change acts as a threat multiplier for conflicts over access to increasingly scarce resources and for instability and international and internal displacement, which is particularly the case in vulnerable or fragile countries and regions lacking the necessary capacity for building resilience and coping with disasters during and after they happen.

The diverse nature of the interlinkages between climate change and security, together with the range of measures required to prevent, reduce and address them effectively, makes it essential to take an integrated approach. The United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, which combines governance, security and resilience actions, is a good example. We welcome the reflection of climate and environmental risks in the latest report of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel.

Assessing climate and environmental risks and their potential impact on socioeconomic stability should be done in all countries, but especially has to become a priority in the most fragile situations. That is essential for promoting resilience and preparedness, thereby contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Further work is required to ensure that relevant climate and environmental risks are appropriately included in the risk assessments that form the basis of the decisions of the Security Council, and they need to be included in early-warning systems, thereby reinforcing the Council's conflict-prevention role. Inter-pillar cooperation is essential. In that regard, we consider the growing advisory role played by the Peacebuilding Commission vis-à-vis the Security Council as very important.

We should also remember the greater risks, burdens and adverse impacts on women and girls during and following disasters, including a heightened risk of gender-based violence as they attempt to gain access to food and other basic needs for family members and themselves. Empowering women as one of the drivers of economic growth strengthens societal resilience. Climate change and disaster-risk-reduction measures have to be gender responsive, sensitive to indigenous knowledge systems and respect human rights.

Incorporating climate-security factors into strategic-level policy frameworks and practical guidance at national, regional and multilateral levels, as well as in the national voluntary reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals, is a first step. As a long-term measure, the sustainable management of natural resources and close cooperation between countries where such resources are shared is essential for reducing the risk of related internal or international conflicts.

Ambitious climate action under the Paris Agreement and beyond — for example, at the 2019 climate summit to be convened by the Secretary-General — must remain the cornerstone of our joint commitment. The EU is convinced that multilateral action and partnerships, treating the causes and the symptoms and promoting cooperation, are central in that regard. We work closely with our partners around the globe to enhance our joint capacity to mitigate and adapt to climate change, confront environmental degradation, manage disasters and address wider socioeconomic impacts.

With a wide range of programmes, the EU supports measures to strengthen resilience in an integrated manner in different regions of the world. For example, under Euroclima Plus, we are promoting climate-resilient development in 18 Latin American countries, with a focus on the most vulnerable. Our new Pacific initiative, which we launched with partners at last year's One Planet Summit, aims at the same time to address impacts of climate change and build resilience in 19 countries and overseas territories. With the Alliance for the Sahel, designed around six priority sectors, including energy and climate, the aim is to strengthen the coordination among donors to enhance the stability and sustainable development of the region. The EU's Copernicus satellite imaging has been used for instant lifesaving response to extreme-weather-event disasters, through, for example, house-to-house guidance to find survivors after Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in 2017. It also guides long-term preparations for climate impacts that threaten the livelihoods and even the existence of coastal communities.

We are convinced that, with committed and targeted action at international, regional, national and local levels, we can reduce the risk of climate-related disasters and ensure that their impacts can be better handled. By achieving that, we would remove a significant risk for peace and security in many parts of the world.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Barbados.

**Ms. Thompson** (Barbados): Today I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which aligns itself with the statement that will be made later today by the representative of Belize on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

CARICOM strongly believes that there is a nexus between peace, security, development and sustainability — a delicate balance now threatened by climate change. That threat, which is posed to all countries, developed and developing alike, cannot go unanswered, and requires a holistic strategic response at the national and multilateral levels.

We wish to note, first, that CARICOM adheres to the view that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should remain the primary United Nations agency to respond to the phenomena of climate change. Secondly, while the threat to the peace and

security of the entire human family is real, small island developing States, including those in the Caribbean subregion, are in the vortex of an imminent existential threat, requiring a pre-emptive response that includes risk assessment, planning and appropriate financing for resilience and capacity-building. Thirdly, consideration of this issue by the Security Council should place emphasis on addressing the full gamut of the risks that climate change poses to peace and security. Indeed, a very pertinent issue is how best to coordinate the panoply of actors at the international and regional levels to support States in the mitigation of those security risks.

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change was historic but, as the Secretary-General reminded us only last week, while no reversals were suffered in Katowice, there were no significant advancements of the cause either. We therefore call on developed countries to fulfil their financing, capacity-building and technology-transfer commitments under the Paris Agreement and to work assiduously and urgently towards the 1.5°C goal.

In July, the Heads of State and Government of CARICOM adopted a declaration on climate change in which they called for a global effort to close the mitigation ambition gap and place the world on pathways for low-emissions, climate-resilient development. They also urged the international community to continue to support the Caribbean in its ongoing efforts to contribute to global mitigation, to adapt to the impacts of climate change and to build our region's resilience so as to mitigate and manage the real risk of irreparable loss and damage and to support the region as it aspires to become the world's first climate-smart zone.

Understanding of how climate change threatens peace and security and drives conflicts needs to be improved across the United Nations system. Only then will climate policy underpin all other development planning and initiatives. We cannot lament migration trends as threatening security without addressing the push factor of climate change. We must not place integrated water resources management and general resources planning outside the context of climate change. We should not ignore the history of resource scarcity and its relationship to conflict and war. We dare not close our eyes to the potential impacts of sea-level rise coastal inundation on maritime boundaries and the potential risk for conflict and for State security. We ought not to speak of global peace, security or

sustainability when climate impacts put development out of reach.

The inclusion of relevant analysis in the Secretary-General's regular reporting, risk assessments and early warning is vital. Accordingly, the States of CARICOM note with interest the call made by the Pacific small island developing States on 11 July 11 during the Security Council open debate on climate security risks (see S/PV.8307) for the appointment of a special representative on climate and security, who would not expand the Council's mandate but instead would serve the Secretary-General and fill a critical gap in the United Nations system, while providing the Council with the information it so badly needs. CARICOM also supports the call for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to brief the Security Council on climate change security threats resulting from natural disasters.

In conclusion, CARICOM again thanks the Dominican Republic for convening this important conversation on how the Council could address climate risks in a security context, if at all it should. For CARICOM this represents yet another potent reminder that we must act collaboratively and in earnest to combat climate change before we all find ourselves far beyond any international capacity to cope with its consequences.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

**Mr. Duarte Lopes** (Portugal): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this timely open debate.

Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the observer of the European Union.

We heard the Secretary-General's warning that

“nothing less than our future and the fate of humankind depends on how we rise to the climate challenge”.

Climate change constitutes a direct existential threat to international peace and security, one that can be addressed only through the involvement of, and cooperation between, all Member States. That is the reality that pushes us to seek action and encourages us to have climate change more strongly reflected in the work of the Security Council.

We know all too well the concerning trends we face — the unprecedented economic costs of climate-related disasters, energy-related carbon dioxide emissions at historic highs and warmer and more acidic oceans than ever before. Those challenges require urgent and ambitious action. We therefore commend the convening of the Secretary-General's 2019 climate summit in September, as well as the President of the General Assembly's high-level meeting slated for March.

What brings us together today is the recognition that, among its many effects, climate change also has a concrete impact on international peace and security. Climate change is a major threat multiplier, particularly in already fragile regions. The added tension of competition over diminishing natural resources adds fuel to existing conflicts. Existing vulnerabilities are amplified by rising waters, excessive rainfall and prolonged drought, thereby increasing social and economic instability, which often leads people to move in search of better living conditions. Those concerns are reflected in the 2017 Hague Declaration on Planetary Security, with a special focus on combating desertification in the Sahel region and optimizing international coordination efforts.

Portugal's strategic concept of national defence, adopted in 2013, also addresses that reality by taking into consideration environmental threats and risks and paving the way for strengthening our capacity to prevent, adapt and respond to environment-related security challenges.

During the Portuguese presidency of the Security Council in November 2011, the Council held a high-level briefing (see S/PV.6668) on the new challenges to international peace and security, where the issue of the impact of climate change on refugees and displaced persons was considered. That debate has since evolved, thanks to the efforts of many Member States that sought to bring this issue to the fore, including, most recently, Sweden in 2018. We believe that the time is ripe for further including relevant climate and environmental risks in risk assessments that form the basis of the Security Council's discussions, thereby bolstering the Council's conflict prevention role.

In conclusion, it is essential that the international community implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, work together to address the impacts of climate change and ensure support for those States that are most

vulnerable to its effects. The Security Council cannot ignore the many interlinkages between climate change and security. It should stand ready to take the necessary measures required to prevent, reduce and address the existing risks. Portugal supports an integrated approach to those challenges, one that is based on inter-pillar and interregional cooperation and aimed at promoting resilience and preparedness. And we see that approach as a necessary step towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

**Mr. Sinirlioglu** (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for bringing yet another critical issue to the attention of the Security Council. Climate change is an existential challenge, and its adverse and transboundary impacts on the economy, health and the environment pose major threats for future generations.

Climate change-related disasters have become an underlying cause of social instability in recent decades, by contributing to large-scale displacements. Environmental degradation and competition over resources continue to play a critical role in conflicts in many regions. They also halt progress on security, stability and development. The International Organization for Migration estimates that the number of people who might be forced to migrate due to environmental degradation by 2050 could be as high as 200 million. Climate-related disasters caused thousands of deaths in 2017 and a loss of \$320 billion. There is no doubt that those figures will put further pressure on host countries for the displaced and create new challenges for the existing legal frameworks for displacement and migration. Those facts oblige us to reflect on the consequential economic and security implications of climate change.

The Caribbean and Pacific regions are heavily and increasingly affected by climate change and related security consequences, despite having made almost no contribution to global warming. Slow-onset hazards, such as increasing sea levels and extreme weather-related disasters, endanger the very existence of small island developing States. Those circumstances also have critical impacts on the sustenance of people who are mostly engaged in fishing, forestry or agriculture.

There is an urgent need to establish and adapt systematic and comprehensive resilience-building tools for those countries. Those mechanisms must address the risks of social and political instability and conflicts that arise from the interaction of climate change and sociopolitical factors. The transfer of technology and know-how to those countries is an urgent necessity. The capacities of local populations and national Governments should be strengthened with policies and strategies that will enable them to better cope with the devastating effects of climate-related disasters. Turkey is willing and ready to contribute to such efforts. Through its humanitarian and development agencies, Turkey prioritizes assisting countries that have been critically affected by extreme weather events and disasters, which cause a heavy toll on people's livelihoods, by delivering mobile hospitals and aid materials and deploying search-and-rescue teams.

Turkey, too, is located in a vulnerable region with respect to climate change. The region is severely affected by global warming, which has caused a decrease in precipitation and a rise in drought and land degradation — 2017 was the driest year in the past 44 years. Consequently, Turkey is expected to become a water-stressed country by 2030. Turkey has pursued a firm position on climate change. In an attempt to provide its citizens with a low-carbon-intensity environment, Turkey strives to integrate global climate change-related objectives in its development policies, disseminate energy efficiency, increase the use of clean and renewable energy resources and actively participate in the global efforts to tackle climate change.

As the Secretary-General has been strongly warning, climate change is the defining issue of our time and is running faster than we are. Combating climate change and related disasters requires global cooperation and equitable burden-sharing. The entry into force of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the approval of its rulebook are surely significant achievements. Turkey actively contributed to the negotiations with a view to reaching a successful agreement. Nevertheless, the Paris Agreement can be successfully implemented only if it is based on the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities, respective capabilities and equity. Turkey, as a country facing critical vulnerabilities related to climate change, remains committed to implementing the necessary measures to protect our planet and overcome those

challenges on equal terms with countries with similar development levels.

Today's debate has reconfirmed the diverse linkages between climate change, on the one hand, and peace and security, on the other hand. No nation is immune to the related challenges. Therefore, we need to work in unity in facing them. We thank the Dominican Republic presidency for focusing on this important issue.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

**Mr. Favre** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We thank the Dominican Republic for organizing this debate on a crucial topic. Switzerland welcomes this opportunity to discuss the nexus between climate-related disasters and peace and security in the Security Council. We recognize the urgent need to take proactive steps to limit the impact of climate change on international peace and security.

Today's open debate clearly demonstrates the global dimension of climate change, the effects of which differ according to the specific characteristics of each country. Switzerland is also increasingly experiencing the consequences of climate change. For example, during the heat wave of 2018 in our region, shipping on the Rhine, which is of high strategic importance to our country's economy, was heavily hindered by high temperatures, insufficient rainfall and, consequently, low water levels. That interrupted import and export trade, leaving landlocked Switzerland with limited access to vital goods, such as fuels. In a globalized world economy, the acceleration of climate change will have an increasing impact on human and economic activities. Such developments threaten our collective stability and security.

In order to prepare for these new challenges, Switzerland has adopted a national strategy on adaptation to climate change. In addition, Switzerland has commissioned impact studies and an assessment of existing climate change and safety measures to implement the adaptation measures needed to protect its population. Switzerland's concerns about the effects of climate change on peace and security are reflected in its international commitments. For example, Switzerland launched the Blue Peace Initiative in 2010, which aims to strengthen cross-border cooperation on water resource management.



We note that climate change also affects human security, that is, the material and immaterial security of individuals in areas as diverse as the economy, health and culture. In order to mitigate those effects, the focus should be on prevention. That requires early-warning systems to systematically identify situations in which climate change acts as a risk multiplier, in order to develop adequate responses.

The Security Council has an important role to play in this context, particularly on two points. First, the Council must systematically integrate climate risks into the regional and country situations already on its agenda. Secondly, the Security Council must be able to take full advantage of the existing information and resources available within the United Nations system. Climate data collections, climate scenarios and early-warning systems already exist and are being successfully applied today. It is therefore vital to exchange that knowledge and utilize synergies within the United Nations, including the Security Council. Effective coordination should be established so that the topics of climate change and security can be adequately tackled and addressed.

In conclusion, we must take proactive and systematic measures, including in the Council, in order to ensure international peace and security in a context in which the risks of climate fragility, extreme disasters and slow-onset hazards are increasing. Another excellent opportunity to address climate change in the specific context of disasters will be the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which will meet in May in Geneva.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

**Ms. Bird** (Australia): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important debate. Australia welcomes this discussion.

We align ourselves with the Pacific Islands Forum statement to be delivered by the representative of Nauru.

Global warming, rising sea levels and more extreme weather events are increasing pressure on communities and stressing food, water and energy resources. As environmental pressures build, we need to be ready to address climate-related security threats. Australia has committed to spending at least \$1 billion in developing countries over five years in order to strengthen resilience to the challenges posed by climate change,

including \$300 million directly to the Pacific region. As the largest bilateral donor to the Pacific region, we build resilience through every sector of our aid programme, including infrastructure, health, education and food and water security.

In September last year, Pacific Islands Forum leaders adopted the Boe Declaration on Regional Security. The Declaration acknowledges that climate change remains the single-greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific. To help implement the Boe Declaration, Australia is working with Pacific partners to establish a Pacific fusion centre, which will enhance regional information-sharing and analysis and draw on climate data and disaster analysis to inform responses to shared security threats. Australia is also establishing a \$2 billion Australian infrastructure financing facility for the Pacific. The facility will work with partners in the Pacific to build key infrastructure in sectors such as energy, water and transport. That will build on our decades of support for high-quality climate and sea-level monitoring across the Pacific, as well as significant humanitarian assistance following disaster events.

Australia believes that we must take a longer-term development perspective on reducing disaster risk, and we are committed to helping countries in the Asia-Pacific region to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Our disaster risk reduction development assistance has consistently exceeded the target of 1 per cent of official development assistance since it was recommended at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2009. As part of that commitment, Australia is looking forward to co-hosting, with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2020.

Integrating disaster risk reduction into our development assistance investments is at the heart of Australia's approach. We do that through climate and disaster risk screening, climate and disaster proofing new investments and designing programmes to ensure that development outcomes are attained, even under changing climatic conditions. We also implement mandatory safeguards to ensure that we protect the environment when delivering programmes overseas. The Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change are mutually reinforcing. The

challenge is to translate the policy coherence among those three frameworks into practice.

Australia recognizes that global and national efforts to reduce emissions and limit warming must be at the centre of our approach. Adopting the Paris Agreement rulebook in Poland last year was a significant step forward. It reaffirmed the importance of meeting global challenges with global solutions through the rules-based order and provides a framework to bring the Paris Agreement to life. Other parts of the United Nations system must complement those global and national efforts and assist us to better understand and address the security implications of climate change. Australia would welcome an opportunity to help the many valuable parts of the United Nations system to coalesce around a collective response to these pressing issues.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

**Mr. Perera** (Sri Lanka): Allow me to congratulate the Dominican Republic, not only on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month but also for convening this open debate on one of the most pressing issues of our time — climate change. As an island nation severely impacted upon by natural disasters, Sri Lanka understands the challenges faced by all nations affected by climate change. We also thank all of the briefers for their valuable contributions here this morning.

The World Meteorological Organization has observed that the past three to four years were the warmest on record. Carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere continue to rise, increasing the risk of heat waves, floods, droughts and wild fires. Rising sea levels and coastal degradation threaten the viability of lives and livelihoods in low-lying areas. More frequent flooding and the risk of the loss of territory to the sea increase the prevalence of displacement, migration and social unrest. Island nations like Sri Lanka are particularly vulnerable to the impact of ocean environments and climate change. In the past decade or so, Sri Lanka has been devastated by nature-driven tragedies such as floods, landslides, the massive tsunami of 2004 and other disasters.

For Sri Lanka the ocean and its resources are inextricably interwoven with the lives of our people. The Indian Ocean, in which we are located, provides employment, food and avenues of trade and commerce. Our large coastal communities survive at the ocean level. For us the rise of the seas, the pollution of

the oceans, the depletion of fish and good coastal ecosystems are not abstractions, they are the core of our existence.

Only a global vision implemented through commitment and multilateral cooperation, in keeping with the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the national unity of States, will halt the degradation of this planet and the resulting threat to peace and security. Therefore, solidarity in international relations is vital, not only in addressing this issue at all levels and stages — from prevention to post-disaster management — but also in providing disaster relief, both in the long and short term. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Goals, among other instruments, constitute the fundamental normative framework for systematically addressing climate change. Sri Lanka continues to strongly endorse the Paris Agreement. Indeed, we stand behind every significant international environmental agreement. It is our hope that the collective interests embodied in those instruments will be the basis for global consensus on climate change and its global impact.

The nexus between climate change and international peace and security becomes evident in several areas. Among them is the multiplication of threats. Climate change multiplies threats, as it creates a scarcity of some of the most essential natural resources. If resilience is low, then communities may be internally displaced, increasing exploitation by extremist elements. The added tension of competition over diminishing natural resources could add fuel to existing conflicts. With regard to increasing migration, refugee movements and internal shifts in population. Environmental degradation, together with political, economic and social insecurity, is also one of the main drivers of migration and refugee movements. That phenomenon has caused panic, leading some States to double down on anti-immigrant rhetoric and resort to sealing off borders, exacerbating international tensions. With regard to local competition over resources, according to media reports, global warming claims approximately 400,000 lives each year worldwide — many due to extreme weather events, but most due to climate change-induced hunger and disease. Natural resource competition and food shortages can contribute to regional instability or civil conflicts.

As to the international response to extreme weather events and disasters, the way in which Governments and the international community respond to natural disasters could increase or mitigate the risk of conflict. The need to respect inherent human dignity and the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and non-discrimination in providing disaster relief embodies the underpinning of third-State conduct regarding a natural disaster that takes place in another State. A departure from those principles could lead to international tension and possible threats to international peace and security. The principle of impartiality is of particular importance to ensure that those providing disaster relief carry out their activities with the sole aim of responding to the disaster in accordance with humanitarian principles, and not for the purpose of interfering in the domestic affairs of an affected State.

Against that background, it is essential to keep in mind that international cooperation must not diminish the primary role of the affected State in the direction, control, coordination and supervision of relief assistance. International cooperation must always be complementary to the overriding duty of the affected State to persons within its jurisdiction. If those principles are not adhered to, in the worst case it may create grievances and increase the risk of conflict, while in the best case Government action can be a springboard to build peace and increase resilience.

In that context, the recent work accomplished by the International Law Commission on the topic of the protection of persons in the event of disasters reflects the careful balance that must be struck in recognizing the primary role of the affected State in providing disaster relief assistance to its people and, at the same time, in underlining the value of international solidarity and cooperation in providing disaster relief to an affected State as a genuine humanitarian measure.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

**Mr. Gonzalez** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the concept note (S/2019/1, annex) circulated in support of our discussions on this topic, and we thank the briefers for their valuable contributions.

This debate is taking place in a decisive year in which we will hold the Secretary-General's climate summit with the presence of world leaders, in search of heightened international commitment to combating

climate change. That effort is reinforced by the high-level dialogue on financing for development called for by the presidency of the General Assembly, as well as the High-level Political Forum, at which progress will be reviewed on Sustainable Development Goal 13, on climate change. Those spaces will also promote, in addition to an exchange of views on this phenomenon and its close relationship with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the optimization of a global response to this threat. The coming decade will be decisive in terms of climate action. Therefore, if we do not act now and do not face this phenomenon in a determined and coordinated way, achieving the goals set for 2030 will be almost impossible.

The science is clear in that the current nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change are not sufficient to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C by 2030, and that the countries located in the tropics and subtropics of the southern hemisphere will experience the greatest impact on economic growth due to climate change.

As stated in the concept note for this debate, climate change and its disaster risks are global, but also differentiated. The Latin American region, including Colombia, is highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. In the case of our country, that is due to its high level of biodiversity, geographical location and specific development challenges. That has been evidenced by the increasingly intense and frequent phenomena of El Niño and La Niña, which have caused enormous human, economic and environmental losses. Between 2010 and 2011, the La Niña phenomenon cost the country approximately 2.2 per cent of its gross domestic product. Then, in 2015-2016, we suffered the El Niño phenomenon, which turned out to be the second-strongest occurrence in history, with catastrophic effects that resulted in forest fires, water scarcity and many hectares of agricultural land being impacted upon, leading to a dramatic increase in food prices.

That is why adaptation to climate change is a priority for our country and the region, as it is the only way to reduce our vulnerability. However, in order to reduce the impacts of this phenomenon, a substantial reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions is essential. It is also crucial that we bolster implementation measures, namely, the provision and mobilization of financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building in developing countries, with a view to enhancing

responses and solutions for the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

My country wishes to take this opportunity to reiterate the importance it attaches to the work of the Security Council in maintaining global peace and stability. We also believe that the natural forum in which to initiate debates and make decisions related to the causes and impacts of climate change, in addition to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, is the General Assembly. That universal organ not only ensures an inclusive and comprehensive approach and the participation of all Member States, but also takes into account the intrinsic relationship between climate change and the social and economic dimensions.

Finally, allow me to reiterate my country's total commitment to comprehensively pursuing matters related to climate change.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Papua New Guinea.

**Mr. Rai** (Papua New Guinea): Small island developing States, which are sovereign equals at the United Nations, deserve a seat on the Security Council on a regular and consistent basis. My delegation is therefore pleased that the Dominican Republic, a fellow small island developing State, has been rightly recognized and empowered to play its part in the Council. We applaud the Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Miguel Vargas Maldonado, for the Dominican Republic's leadership in this open debate on a topical issue that is highly apt, timely and a great starting point to launch its tenure on the Council.

I would like to align these remarks with those to be made by the representatives of Nauru and Tuvalu on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum and the Pacific small island developing States, respectively, and the statements made by the representatives of Australia, Fiji and New Zealand.

In my own country, on the sinking Carteret Islands, in the autonomous region of Bougainville, the majority of the population has been forcibly dislocated, displaced and resettled in-country as a consequence of rising sea levels. Their in-country resettlement continues to be beset by tension and conflict between them and the people from the area of settlement over land and resources. That is due to the land tenure system in my

country, in which the people, not the Government, own the majority of the land.

We are also seeing the same in the northern part of our country, where people from Manam Island have been displaced and relocated as a result of regular volcanic eruptions. Just imagine the same scenario multiplied several times over and the attendant consequences posed to peace and security and in a transboundary context. Those examples demonstrate the importance of addressing the root causes of the threats to peace and security, including from climate change and natural disasters, both at the national level and collectively through the United Nations system, including the Council.

Secondly, we remind the Council that, when we speak of international peace and security in the remit of the Council, we should not forget that we are talking about the lives and livelihoods of "we, the peoples of the United Nations". The basic needs of humankind are food, water and air. We are witnessing the diminishing quality and quantity of those basic needs in many places around the world, which is affecting countless lives and livelihoods as a consequence of the adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters. The recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is unequivocal. Therefore, all aspects and potential sources of instability and insecurity that threaten the welfare of all peoples everywhere must be addressed. That includes the impacts of natural disasters and climate change on peace and security. Let us not allow the doubting Thomases of this world to be the reason for not saving ourselves from the onward dangerous march of climate change and its perils to peace and security.

Thirdly, we value and welcome the continuing debate in the Council on this seminal topic. However, we remain seriously concerned about the unacceptable gulf that continues to exist between the views of the General Assembly and those of the Security Council. General Assembly resolution 63/281 marked the first time that the international community collectively recognized the security implications of climate change. The resolution specifically invites the relevant organs of the United Nations to intensify their efforts in considering and addressing climate change, including its possible security implications. Despite the resolution, there remains minimal concrete or coordinated action at the international level to address the security implications of climate change. That needs to be strengthened now, not in the future.

We welcome the small step in the right direction taken recently by the Security Council in acknowledging the adverse impact of climate change and peace and security in the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel region. We urge that this be viewed in a wider context to cover many other suffering regions, such as our own.

Finally, let me also congratulate and wish Belgium, Germany, Indonesia and South Africa well as they assume their mandate on the Council. We look forward to working in partnership with them to advance our cause and address the issue of climate change.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

**Mr. Skoog** (Sweden): We express our thanks to the briefers this morning. I want to say that, from day one, climate and security was a top priority for Sweden during our tenure on the Security Council over the past two years. We listened to so many countries asking the Council to better pursue this agenda based on the realities on the ground. We have heard that again today, but with further urgency — of course, without prejudice to the mandates of other bodies inside and outside the United Nations.

With conflict prevention as our point of departure, we fully integrated climate-related security risks into our country- and region-specific work. During our two-year term, the Council clearly recognized the links between climate change and security in a number of distinct geographical contexts. The Council repeatedly emphasized the need for adequate risk assessments in order to make our conflict prevention efforts more effective. I agree that there is a need for, and that it would be useful to have, a stand-alone resolution of the Security Council recognizing the connection between security and climate change. But let us not forget, as I said, that there are several decisions that are significant enough to keep the Security Council busy and should hold it to account when it comes to following up on these issues. We very much welcome the steps taken by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme to form a coordination mechanism to that end, which we see as an embryo of improved analysis of the common threats that exist between climate change and security and which need to be put to the Council on a more frequent basis.

In July 2018, during our presidency of the Security Council, we organized a thematic debate — as you, Mr. President, are doing today — which demonstrated broad and cross-regional support to take the agenda forward. In that light, we thank the Dominican Republic for taking up the baton and organizing today's timely debate. We have now moved beyond the question of whether climate change impacts peace and security; this has been established and recognized. It is now about what to do, how to do it and to do it now.

Some negative effects of climate change on security are already evident, including water and food insecurity, increasingly frequent extreme weather and natural disasters and sea-level rise. Those are phenomena that we know risk leading to loss of life, displacement and competition over scarce resources and social tensions, and indeed the triggering of conflict. The fact that countries all over the world are reflecting those threats in their respective national security strategies just goes to show how real and widespread the issue has become. We are entering into unknown territory. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change special report *Global Warming of 1.5°C* makes that abundantly clear. The world has already crossed some of its planetary boundaries — I think the briefer from the World Meteorological Organization stressed the same issues in his briefing this morning. Of course, this has far-reaching consequences that are not yet known, including on international peace and security. I would like to make three brief practical suggestions on the way ahead when it comes to addressing the more immediate concerns.

First, the Council — and other key decision-making bodies within and outside the United Nations — need comprehensive climate-related security risk information, forward-looking analysis and early-warning mechanisms to be able to make informed decisions. That was already being called for in the presidential statement driven by Germany on climate and security in 2011 (S/PRST/2011/15) and must now be made a reality.

Secondly, as we begin to better understand the risks, there is a need to develop approaches that more effectively address them, including through updated mission mandates, programmes and allocation of resources. We must also ensure that diplomatic efforts, training and mission deployments, as well as development policies, are informed by due risk assessments.

Thirdly, we should increasingly consider climate-related challenges within mediation efforts.

To meet the challenges related to climate and security, we need a true institutional home for those issues within the United Nations. The coordination mechanism is an important first step and could be further developed. We believe that the upcoming climate summit in September would be the appropriate venue to push this forward.

Finally, the Swedish Government will remain an active partner on this urgent agenda by building on our experiences from pursuing these issues on the Security Council for the past two years. That includes through our significant contribution to all the relevant climate funds and our world-leading national policy on cutting carbon emissions, which is now enshrined in our national laws.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

**Mr. Bin Momen** (Bangladesh): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for taking the initiative to discuss the interlinkages between climate-related disasters and international peace and security. I would also like to express our deep appreciation to the briefers for their thought-provoking presentations.

Disasters induced by global climate change have the potential to turn into major security concerns. The findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's special report on *Global Warming of 1.5°C* warn us about the dangerous consequences that will follow if we fail to limit global warming to 1.5°C, in particular in the areas of poverty eradication, food security and public health.

Bangladesh is one of the worst-affected countries by the impacts of global climate change, due to its geographical location. It is highly prone to natural disasters, such as cyclones, floods, landslides and earthquakes. Climate change poses a serious threat to our 160 million people, although we have hardly contributed to the deterioration of the environment. Just a 1°C increase in the global temperature and resultant sea level rise will cause the inundation of a large area of Bangladesh and, we fear, the displacement of 40 million people by the end of this century. We are also losing 2 per cent of our annual gross domestic product (GDP) due to natural calamities and environmental degradation.

Climate change-induced salinity and other disasters are harming our production of rice and other crops. In addition to all of that, hosting 1.1 million forcibly displaced Rohingyas from neighbouring Myanmar is also impacting our fragile environment.

Tackling climate change is directly linked to sustainable development and resilience-building. In line with that perspective, under the leadership of its climate crusader, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh is carrying forward its efforts for sustainable development with specific plans for carbon budgeting, the de-carbonization of manufacturing pathways and low-carbon industrialization. In considering multidimensional vulnerabilities posed by climate change and disasters, our Government recently adopted its Delta Plan 2100 to guide our sustainable development pathway for the next 100 years.

Bangladesh is committed to implementing its nationally determined contributions within the framework of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We have mainstreamed climate actions and disaster management in our national planning and sustainable development strategy. Over 1 per cent of our GDP is being used to combat climate change. To ensure food security for our people, we have been investing in transforming our agriculture and making it more resilient to the impacts of climate change and disasters. We have taken various initiatives to increase forestation, including a project worth \$50 million for the conservation of the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Despite numerous challenges, at the national level Bangladesh has been able to reduce casualties in incidents of natural disasters in recent times by taking various measures, such as improvements to our early warning system, the dissemination of information, the establishment of cyclone shelters and the active engagement of dedicated Cyclone Preparedness Programme volunteers for preparedness and response activities.

Halting global climate change and reducing disaster risks will largely depend upon the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 to their true letter and spirit. The recently adopted Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration also acknowledges that investing in, and accelerating

global cooperation for, climate change mitigation and adaptation would contribute to the elimination of the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their countries of origin.

Therefore, we must redouble our efforts for sustainable development. Bangladesh is of the firm view that climate change and related disasters must be discussed in the mould of international development cooperation. Big emitters must aim for the rapid mitigation of greenhouse gases. Also, providing financial resources and ensuring technology transfer to vulnerable countries for their adaptation efforts would be the most effective response to the threats posed by climate change and related disasters.

While we emphasize that the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and other relevant global documents and mechanisms are a must to fight the effects of climate change, we are not ignoring the fact that there could be a nexus between climate change and international peace and security. The whole United Nations system should work together to improve our knowledge and understanding to find out if climate change poses any direct threat to peace and security in a specific locality, or if it is one of the multiplying factors. The whole United Nations system should also speak with one voice to prevent or resolve any crisis that is an evident outcome of the adverse effects of climate change.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the African Union.

**Ms. Mohammed**: Let me start by congratulating your delegation, Mr. President, on the convening of today's open debate on a very pressing and important subject. I would like also to thank all the briefers for their insightful presentations.

Climate change is undoubtedly one of the most important global challenges of our time. No country or region can be considered immune to its devastating consequences, which not only undermine development gains but also threaten the very existence of our communities. This is indeed a critical issue to which we must devote all the attention it deserves. While in some domains it is still debated whether climate change and conflict have a direct or indirect causal relationship, there is no doubt, as many speakers before me have stated today, that we must recognize that climate change could create conditions for conflict, or act as a threat multiplier in certain circumstances. Those

conditions could become tipping points for difficult situations and could also narrow options for solving problems. The situation in the Lake Chad basin and in the Sahel region, where poor communities heavily depend upon ever-shrinking natural resources for their livelihoods, is a clear manifestation of the complex relationship between climate change and conflict. Against that background, allow me to emphasize the following three points.

First, although they are by far less responsible for the emergence and fast aggravation of this phenomenon, developing countries suffer the most from the impacts of climate change. For example, Africa's contribution to the greenhouse gases is insignificant, yet our continent remains one of the most vulnerable areas to the adverse impacts of climate change, which threaten the realization of the development aspirations as outlined in Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. Some African countries have, and will, confront risks from sea-level rise and extreme weather, including stifling heat, intense rains and powerful storm surges. Others have, and will continue to, face the risks of more challenging conditions in terms of food and agriculture, water, health, fisheries, infrastructure, transportation and other sources of livelihood. Climate change is also partially to blame for increased migration, particularly by our youth.

Secondly, if we are to seriously address climate change-induced conflicts and security risks, Member States have no alternative but to fully implement their respective commitments made in the various frameworks aimed at tackling the adverse impacts of climate change. In accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, all countries — particularly developed ones — should take concrete measures to honour those obligations and pledges in line with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, by providing sufficient and sustained climate financing to developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable ones. The timely provision of a clear means of implementation for both mitigation and adaptation, as well as the facilitation of the transfer of appropriate technology, cannot be overemphasized. Such efforts, in our view, would complement national and regional efforts to address the adverse impacts of climate change and prevent climate change-related security threats and conflicts.

Thirdly, the African Union's response to climate change is demonstrated through its sustained

commitment to international environmental regimes and its own environmental framework. Three years after the conclusion of the Paris Agreement, Africa continues to consolidate its efforts, focusing particularly on partnerships, to ensure that African nations are able to pursue a low-carbon and climate-resilient development path through the implementation of their nationally determined contributions. Let me seize this opportunity to reiterate Africa's strong commitment to the Paris Agreement, which provides an ambitious framework for addressing this global threat.

Most recently, building on presidential statement S/PRST/2018/3, adopted on 30 January 2018 on West Africa and the Sahel, which acknowledged the link between climate change and violence, the African Union (AU) dedicated the 774th meeting of the Peace and Security Council, held on 21 May 2018, to an open session on the link between climate change and conflicts in Africa and addressing the security implications. The Peace and Security Council also highlighted the linkage between climate change and peace and security in Africa and its threat to global peace and security.

In that context, and noting that no country or region is immune to climate change, Peace and Security Council members stated the importance of coordinated efforts in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change and provided a set of recommendations to member States and AU partners. Those recommendations included, notably, the following: first, the need to enhance cooperation among stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels to develop coping mechanisms and enhance resilience; secondly, the need to develop institutional frameworks, both at the national and continental levels, to proactively respond to the security repercussions of climate change-related conflicts; and, last but not least, the need to strengthen early-warning mechanisms to prevent climate-related conflicts.

In conclusion, I would like stress that our endeavour to fight climate change will not be genuine unless it is anchored in a multilateral approach, of which the Paris Agreement remains one of the best illustrations. Let me assure you, Sir, that the African Union will continue to advance multilateral cooperation and work constructively with its partners towards addressing the root causes and negative effects of climate change and related security threats and conflicts.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

**Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the Dominican Republic as it takes a seat on the Security Council for the first time and presides over it this month. The initiative to convene this debate on the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security, as well as the presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Miguel Vargas Maldonado, demonstrates that bringing this fundamental issue to the attention of the membership is a priority for the presidency.

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, and its adverse effects undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development. Its effects are real and sudden and disproportionately affect vulnerable groups. Its global nature requires maximum international cooperation. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the main intergovernmental forum that possesses the necessary expertise to negotiate a global response to climate change. Discussions in the Security Council on this issue complement global efforts to better understand the links between climate change and international peace and security, as well as to mobilize the capacities of United Nations organs in line with their respective mandates.

The increase in global temperature, desertification and droughts, sea-level rise and natural disasters is leading to the destruction of homes and infrastructure, loss of crops, food insecurity, unemployment and increased inequalities. The effects on the environment, the economy and society can see the benefits of development gained with so much effort reversed overnight. The humanitarian consequences are catastrophic, with the loss of millions of lives, displacement, the separation of families, exposure to exploitation and susceptibility to marginalization. It is alarming that people must travel long distances daily in search of water and food, to the detriment of education and work opportunities, and that young people run the risk of being recruited by violent extremism.

Conflicts generated by climate change, due to their increasing number, intensity and duration, deserve urgent and innovative approaches. In that context, 135.7 million people required humanitarian assistance in the year 2017, with financing needs of \$23.5 billion. Against that backdrop, Ecuador promotes the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, as well as the right to development. We advocate for an increase in adequate, predictable



and sustainable financing, in addition to the transfer of technology, to developing countries.

It is necessary to promote preventive approaches to address disaster risks in a comprehensive manner, with people-centred, multi-risk, multisectoral, inclusive and accessible policies. That is acknowledged in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, as disaster-prone developing countries require special attention in view of their greater vulnerability and levels of risk, which often exceed their capacity to respond and recover.

Sustainable development is not possible without peace and security, and peace and security are at risk without sustainable development. We hope that this debate will promote political will and the mobilization of resources in the relevant forums to address climate change.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

**Mr. Amayo** (Kenya): I wish to congratulate the Dominican Republic on joining the Security Council, as well as on its ascension to the presidency of the Council for the month of January. I also wish to congratulate the other four newly elected non-permanent members of the Security Council — Belgium, Germany, Indonesia, and South Africa — and, at the outset, convey our support to them as they undertake the noble tasks ahead of them.

I should also not forget to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on such an important subject and for circulating the concept note that has guided this debate (S/2019/1, annex). I also take this opportunity to thank all the briefers for their enlightening interventions this morning on the nexus between climate change and conflicts, as well as related insecurity.

Kenya attaches great importance to the effective management of climate-related disasters, which remain a major threat to sustainable development. The presentations and experiences shared on climate change by briefers and various speakers today point to the fact that many of our nations remain exposed to droughts, hurricanes, tsunamis, floods and extreme temperatures, among other existential risks. Those hazards have often wiped out investments, destroyed livelihoods, engendered conflict and propagated poverty.

Where poverty is high and adaptive capabilities insufficient, there is considerable vulnerability, even

to mildly extreme weather and other climatic shocks. In most cases it is women, children and persons with disabilities who bear the greatest risk. Cases of climate-related extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods, have become regular occurrences in many parts of Africa and are a leading threat to sustainable development, as well as peace and security. For instance, in the Horn of Africa, persistent droughts often cause food insecurity in addition to water- and pasture-related conflicts, let alone general economic instability.

My delegation believes that, through greater global cooperation and collaboration, we can adapt to, and improve our resilience against, climate-related disasters that continue to threaten international peace and security. We may not be able to change the time, place, frequency or magnitude of climate-related disasters, but we can at least prepare, plan and minimize their impact whenever they occur.

Many climate-related international frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, are anchored on the assumption that, through our collective efforts, we can effectively combat disasters and cultivate resilience, especially among the most vulnerable in our societies. However, the key challenge remains mobilizing means of implementation, particularly at local levels. Moreover, due to insufficient financing and a lack of appropriate technologies and other capacities in developing countries, the uniform domestication of international guidelines becomes a major challenge.

To succeed, we must close implementation gaps through more investments and the strengthening of the relevant national institutions responsible for disaster preparedness and management. Kenya updated its national disaster risk management policy in 2018, after benchmarking the best practices in disaster risk management. The policy lays down strategies to ensure that the Government commits itself to enhancing research in disasters and the formulation of risk reduction strategies. The policy is hinged, inter alia, on an effective early-warning, information and prediction system, mainstreaming disaster management in development planning and a strong institutional framework, particularly at the grass roots level, to coordinate various stakeholders.

We believe that we should renew our commitment at the global level and revitalize international cooperation and partnerships for disaster and risk reduction, particularly in the key areas of climate-related information gathering, early warning, research and development. Therefore, the mobilization of adequate and predictable financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building will also enable Governments and regional organizations to respond to the negative effects of climate change more effectively and avert many conflicts and related security threats.

In conclusion, I reiterate Kenya's support for multilateral efforts to address the impact of climate-related disasters on international peace and security. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's prioritization of, and call for, greater ambition on climate action. We look forward to the climate summit scheduled for September.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

**Ms. Miguel** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Saint Vincent and the Grenadines congratulates the Dominican Republic, a member of our Caribbean family, on raising this important discussion in the Security Council

We would like to align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Barbados on behalf of the Caribbean Community, and with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Belize, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

We reaffirm that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary body for addressing climate change, while also recognizing that we need a multi-pronged approach to fight it. Those two ideas are not mutually exclusive. The dire need for economy-wide carbon reduction makes climate change an irrefutably political matter, and its effects make it an existential matter of the highest order, it goes to the very existence of our country.

In all of that, we must admit that some have far more responsibility for those assaults on our shores than others. As ironic as it is, those least responsible suffer the most, for example, small island developing States and the Sahel. In effect, major emitters that fail to set and honour ambitious mitigation pledges are committing a direct act of hostility against small

island developing States, and we ought to resist their recklessness against our interests. We draw a direct, causal connection between any such abdication and the future death and destruction that island States face as the result of increasingly frequent and intense weather events.

The climate threat is unique, unprecedented and urgent. Because of that, it is often difficult to deal with. But that is no reason to sweep it under the rug. The rise of climate change as the existential threat of our era has not replaced the persistent peril of armed conflict across the globe. The human suffering in Syria, Yemen and Myanmar demands greater international attention and action. Similarly, the potential threats to international peace and security posed by tensions on the Korean peninsula, among the Gulf States and in the State of Palestine require persistent and prioritized diplomacy. Moreover, the historical injustices done to Africa must be made right as we navigate the myriad and complex peace and security issues on the continent. However, we must be careful not to present a false choice among those issues. We have to deal with them all, no matter how inconvenient climate-related security may be.

We raise our voice in this organ to call on carbon emitters to make deep cuts to stop the causes of climate change, and we echo the call to make the Security Council more aware of, and more sensitive to, the terrible consequences for international peace and security. If we first recognize climate as a security threat and then work in solidarity to protect all people from it, we are on the right track. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would be honoured and humbled by the opportunity to bring principled analysis and problem solving to this issue in the Security Council and to build bridges to that end.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

**Mr. Flynn** (Ireland): I would like to begin by thanking the Dominican Republic for hosting today's debate on this important and urgent topic, and extend Ireland's congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your presidency of the Security Council. The voices of small island developing States (SIDS) must be heard and heeded in this Chamber.

Climate change is real. Its impact is global, and our security is at risk. The denial of climate change needs to end. The denial of the link between climate change and the mandate of the Council also needs to end.

It is crystal clear that the international community has struggled to coherently respond to the challenge of climate change. While the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change are important steps, the glaring reality is that climate-related disasters are a major threat and will continue to occur, and the Security Council must respond to their impacts. We know that existing fragilities are exacerbated by climate-related disasters, which can erode food and water security, increase gender inequality and damage livelihoods. A growing body of research has demonstrated the links among climate change, conflict and displacement. Put simply, climate change is a threat multiplier.

While the impact of climate-related disasters on international peace and security varies across regions and States, a global response is the only way we can address the threat. We believe that climate and security concerns should be considered across all country-specific situations on the Security Council's agenda. We want to see United Nations operations across the peace and development nexus assessing the risks of climate change.

We must work to identify best practices in addressing the threat of climate to security. Success factors can be replicated, and we must find a way to do that, through, for example, the Security Council finding ways to move from discussing the risks of climate change to action. That includes working more systematically with regional and subregional bodies to help us better understand the challenges we face and how to address them.

The global community should also generate evidence-based analysis upon which to draw, in order to better understand the links between climate and security. That must be complemented by hearing the testimonies of those most affected, if we are to understand the complexity of the linkages, how they vary across contexts and how to negate risks. A human rights-based approach to climate policy and the international response is important. The voices of vulnerable small island developing States need to be heard here, and we favour the consideration of better representation of SIDS around this table.

The recognition of women as a resource that can bring about transformative change is also important. Women are those who are most directly affected by climate change, but are also uniquely placed to generate

and lead solutions. Today we also heard eloquently about the role of young people. Let us listen more to those who are rarely invited to this table.

Finally, but important, the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General on climate and security is another concrete step that we can take to advance our work in this area. The future of this planet and all of our futures rely on stepping up to face the reality and the threat multiplier that we see every day in climate change. Our peace, equality and development depend upon it. But we will have neither peace nor security if we fail to address the impacts of climate-related disasters in our world.

You can rely on Ireland, Mr. President, as a prospective non-permanent Security Council member for the term 2021-2022, to work hard and be ambitious for this agenda.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

**Mr. Skoknic Tapia** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to thank the Dominican Republic for presiding over and convening this important Security Council debate on addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security. We appreciate and are grateful for the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Miguel Vargas Maldonado, at this debate. We also thank the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Mr. Achim Steiner; the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo; and scientists Mr. Pavel Kabat and Ms. Lindsay Getschel, for their briefings.

This debate could not be more timely, as it is being held following the adoption by the international community of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change work programme, which establishes the rules and guidelines for the implementation of the Paris Agreement, in Katowice on 16 December, as part of the twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. However, the November report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change describes new challenges and warns us that attaining the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels will require a drastic reduction in global greenhouse gases, as well as far-reaching and in-depth adaptation policies.

The environment is changing faster than our efforts to understand and protect it. Alarm bells are still ringing; the time for hesitation is over. The threat of climate change will define this century and those to come and requires a profound multilateral effort. It is a serious, urgent and growing threat that we cannot continue to ignore or downplay.

We must work together to improve our understanding of the security implications of natural disasters that are related to climate change and devise strategies to assess and mitigate the risks of such disasters. It is therefore essential to develop analytical skills within the United Nations system that allow us to swiftly evaluate the possible climate change-related threats to international security, while providing the Security Council with useful information on those threats and helping States develop and implement action plans for tackling them appropriately.

In that regard, through the Chilean International Cooperation Agency for Development, our country has implemented innovative cooperation mechanisms for building capacity to reduce the risk of disasters at the regional level. We highlight the success achieved through the Kizuna Project, with the Government of Japan, which seeks to train thousands of professionals in Latin America and the Caribbean to manage emergencies and disasters.

We welcome the initiative of Secretary-General António Guterres to host the 2019 climate summit to be held on 23 September. In that regard, I wish to declare the firm and decisive commitment of the Government of Chile to collaborate in the global efforts aimed at addressing the devastating effects of climate change. For that reason, my country will host and preside over the twenty-fifth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP25) in January 2020. Indeed, that fills us with pride, but at the same time represents a huge challenge for our country, which is compelling us to work hard to ensure the success of that important event that will unite the international community. We are undertaking that role based on Chile's commitment to multilateralism, and in particular with the conviction that climate change is a collective task that must be addressed by all members of the international community.

In conclusion, we firmly believe that COP25 should mark a milestone in the drive towards greater climate action. It is important that countries take

that opportunity to announce concrete steps towards heightened levels of ambition in the global response to climate change.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Nauru.

**Ms. Moses** (Nauru): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum member States represented at the United Nations.

I would like to begin by thanking and congratulating the Dominican Republic, a fellow small island developing State, on demonstrating such commendable leadership by placing the issue of climate change squarely on the Security Council agenda. Few countries wanted to discuss the security implications of climate change one decade ago, but it is now impossible to ignore that this once manageable challenge has become a world-changing crisis.

The Pacific Islands Forum leaders met in Nauru in 2018 under the theme, "Building a Strong Pacific: Our People, Our Islands, Our Will", and adopted the Boe Declaration on Regional Security in September. The Pacific region knows that it is stronger when it works together, and it has shown collective leadership to address the impact of climate change-related disasters. The Declaration reaffirms that climate change remains the single-greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific. It also recognizes an expanded concept of security — that climate change poses multifaceted challenges to human security, humanitarian assistance and environment security.

We are already seeing dangerous impacts in our countries and communities, with the most vulnerable among us bearing the greatest burden. According to scientists, climate change has contributed to many of the recent extreme weather events that have devastated communities around the world. Notwithstanding the Paris Agreement, climate change is not going away. There will be no return to a normal climate in our lifetimes. In fact, the situation will continue to deteriorate, even if we achieve our goal to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C. From the perspective of our leaders, the institutions needed to respond to the security implications of climate change are not in place, in part because we know very little about how our human systems will respond to growing climate impacts.

For our purposes here at the United Nations, we must recognize that this type of problem cannot be tackled by countries individually. Through the Boe Declaration the Pacific is committed to working together on coordinated actions that build resilience to the security risks posed by climate change. For better or for worse, our fates are now linked through a global system that often leaves the poorest in a very precarious situation. Our national response matters, but a problem of this magnitude requires much greater regional and international cooperation than what exists today. It also requires the United Nations to work more effectively across institutions with related mandates

I would like to focus for a moment on food production and distribution, because we have some recent experiences to draw upon. The food crisis in 2007 and 2008 provoked social unrest in countries around the world and prompted some to declare states of emergency. Our global supply chains are often celebrated as a marvel of modern capitalism. However, during the food crisis they were unable to get food to the people who needed it at a price they could afford. Many variables contributed to the food crisis, but they included climatic factors in key food producing regions of the world. Scientists are projecting agricultural yields to fall dramatically in a warmer world, and therefore it is only a matter of time before the next food crisis hits.

The food system is not alone in its vulnerability to climate change. Water distribution, international transport, industrial production, finance and insurance markets are complex human systems that are inter-connected, global in reach and often quite fragile. A breakdown in any one of those human systems might be more dangerous than the climate impact that provokes it.

In our view, the appointment of a special representative on climate and security is a critical next step to prepare for the security implications of climate change. I should note that that is not a new proposal; the small island developing States of the Pacific first raised it in 2011. Such a special representative of the Secretary-General would serve the following functions: keep the Secretary-General and Security Council well informed about emerging climate risks that threaten international peace and security; facilitate greater regional and cross-border cooperation on issues that might be affected by climate change; monitor potential tipping points at the climate-security nexus; engage in preventive diplomacy, as appropriate; and support

post-conflict situations when climate change is a risk factor that could undermine stability. The special representative would also be well placed to coordinate the efforts of the relevant United Nations bodies in this area, including the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

We need the courage to grapple with the reality of our present situation, no matter how politically inconvenient it may be. Climate change will be the biggest security challenge of the century. This is not just about containing a handful of hot spots; it will often require a fundamental rethink of how we cooperate in our highly integrated and increasingly dangerous world.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

**Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Brazil): First and foremost, allow me to thank the Dominican presidency for organizing this timely debate on such a critical matter. This open debate provides us with a unique opportunity to shine a light not only on the question of climate-related disasters in all its urgency and complexity, but also on how to best address it institutionally under the aegis of the United Nations.

Brazil empathizes profoundly with the predicament of countries affected by climate-related disasters, especially those people located in disaster-prone areas, who time and again are faced with the insurmountable task of starting anew at the end of every hurricane season or when the earth finally stops shaking. Brazil recognizes the particular challenges that small island developing States face, dealing with the fallout caused by earthquakes, floods, mudslides and other climate-related disasters on their people's safety and well-being, as well as on critical national infrastructure. Multilateral humanitarian coordination in the wake of natural disasters is crucial to improving the situation on the ground, be it by saving lives, providing immediate relief to those in need or, at a later stage, assisting the disaster-struck country with its reconstruction efforts.

Brazil has a long history of showing solidarity with disaster-struck nations, and it could not act any differently. To highlight one example among many, in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti a little over eight years ago, Brazilian Blue Helmets,

serving under the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, were able to act as first responders, handing out clean water, food and basic medicine to the most vulnerable segments of the Haitian population. Host to both the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992 and its follow up conference, Rio+20, Brazil is proud of its credentials on sustainable development and climate change, both domestically and internationally.

Our understanding is that environmental issues do not fall squarely under the authority of the Security Council, the primary organ charged with maintaining international peace and security by the Charter of the United Nations. Linking security issues to the environmental agenda risks mistakenly assuming that any environmental stress, or natural disaster for that matter, will automatically lead to social unrest, armed conflict and, eventually, to a threat to international peace and security. There is no direct cause-and-effect relationship between a natural disaster and the outbreak of conflict, the causes of which, most of the time, are manifold and vary on a case-by-case basis.

That is not to say that the Security Council should refrain from taking climate factors into consideration when a concrete and specific situation surfaces that poses a danger to international peace and security. If, on the one hand, natural disasters can have consequences for the security environment, it is also true that, conversely, armed conflicts can pose a danger to the environment. Involving the entire community of nations, and not only a few selected members, is critical to coming up with the legal formula and the institutional mechanisms necessary to put in place the risk management strategies and the coordination efforts needed to help Member States, Governments and their peoples reduce the impact of natural disasters. We should spare no effort in ensuring that our countries are equipped with the legal framework and institutional architecture necessary to deal with natural disasters.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Ms. Beckles** (Trinidad and Tobago): At the outset, Trinidad and Tobago wishes to align itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Barbados, on behalf of the Caribbean Community, and the statement to be delivered by the representative of Belize, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

Allow me to also congratulate the Dominican Republic on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and to confirm your leadership, Mr. President, in bringing this significant and urgent issue before this Chamber. As small island developing States, both Trinidad and Tobago and the Dominican Republic remain at the forefront of this pressing challenge, and the convening of this open debate reflects the necessity for the international community to truly pursue ambitious commitments and, above all, action towards addressing the impacts of climate change, in particular the nexus between that phenomenon and international peace and security.

Over the past few years, Trinidad and Tobago has experienced harsh dry seasons, record-breaking rainfall and flooding and coastal erosion at an alarming rate. Those experiences are not unique to my country; they are the current reality facing many small island developing States. During the twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Katowice, Poland, the Secretary-General stated that the international community is in deep trouble concerning climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's special report *Global Warming of 1.5 °C* found that the effects of human-induced climate change are worse than previously projected and, therefore, increase the risks to health, livelihoods, human security and economic growth.

However, those climate change-related risks do not occur in a vacuum. At this critical juncture, the far-reaching economic, environmental and social consequences of climate change can exacerbate the vulnerabilities of many countries, including my own. As a threat multiplier, climate change applies additional stress on limited resources, social and economic pressures and the adaptive capacity of our fragile ecosystems, all of which can lead to scarcity, population displacement and conflict.

It is therefore undeniable that the complex and interrelated causes and consequences of climate change on people and the planet require a comprehensive and integrative approach that spans across all the relevant mechanisms and agencies of the United Nations System, including the Security Council. In that regard, Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the Security Council's recognition of the adverse effects of climate change in several specific contexts — the Lake Chad basin, West Africa, the Sahel and Somalia — while

also stressing the need for improved climate-related security risk assessments to more effectively predict potential conflicts.

Notwithstanding that, there is a need to further enhance the understanding about climate change-related security threats and the security implications of climate-related disasters in order to better inform the Security Council about those threats, especially in those regions that are most vulnerable, including small island developing States. By leveraging the institutional knowledge of the Council's peace and security machinery with that of the wider system, there is considerable potential to create synergies among States and the United Nations system towards effectively building resilience through early action aimed at investigating and mitigating climate change-related threats to peace.

Lastly, and probably most fundamental, is the determination of the long-term role of the Security Council and its engagement on this issue. While my delegation fully recognizes the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement as the primary forums for coordinating the global response to climate change, Trinidad and Tobago is of the view that an enhanced understanding of climate-related security risks and how to address them in the Security Council should not, and will not, duplicate the responsibilities of the General Assembly or other United Nations bodies. Rather, it will strengthen the coordinated response of the United Nations and its entities to better deliver on their respective mandates.

In conclusion, Trinidad and Tobago thanks you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate, which serves to galvanize increased attention around the security implications of climate change. For my country, which is on the front line of this existential threat, now is the time for ambitious and earnest action towards addressing climate-change disaster risks to international peace and security.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

**Mr. Dang** (Viet Nam): Viet Nam highly appreciates the Dominican Republic's initiative to hold this open debate on this very important subject. We also thank the briefers for their informative interventions.

The climate is changing faster than we expected, faster than we can move and faster than we can adapt.

The frequency and intensity of climate-related and extreme weather disasters, as well as the severity of their consequences, increase every year. Devastating tropical storms, heavy precipitation, flooding and droughts have caused untold suffering to hundreds of millions of people.

As a result, the displacement and migration of people and food and water insecurity are potential security risks and have been the cause of actual conflict in some cases. The most threatening impact of climate change is sea level rise. Studies show that, in the most optimistic scenario, by 2050, without concrete climate and development action from the international community, hundreds of countries and territories will be affected. The very survival of small island States is at risk. The direct impact of climate change on international peace and security has become more evident. The threat is already here. The way in which we respond to it will define our future.

During the past 20 years, Viet Nam has been among the 10 countries most affected by climate risks, and for the past four years, we have been among the top six. Let me mention just one aspect — sea level rise. A study shows that if the sea level rises by approximately 1 metre by the year 2100, nearly 40 per cent of the Mekong Delta will be flooded. There is already increasing soil salinization by sea water in a large area of the Delta. That will not only affect the livelihoods of nearly 20 million people in that region of Viet Nam but also have an impact on food security beyond its borders, as we are one of the top three rice exporters and the Mekong Delta accounts for 90 per cent of our rice exports.

Viet Nam supports a comprehensive approach to address climate change, including its security implications. We are encouraged to see that in recent years the Security Council has increasingly recognized the importance of this issue and remains focused on it. We emphasize the important roles of the United Nations system, including the Security Council, and many regional organizations. Those roles are very important to ensuring that the security dimension is addressed in their work and cooperation in support of national and regional efforts. In Southeast Asia, in the spirit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region, the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management

is responsible for facilitating cooperation on and coordination of disaster preparedness and response among the 10 ASEAN member States. We call on the United Nations and international partners to closely cooperate with us and to assist us.

We would also encourage further informative exchanges with representatives and experts, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, on the security implications of climate change, as well as more integrated sharing of data and expertise.

We support a comprehensive climate change response plan that addresses all aspects of the issue, including the security implications, and involves the active participation of all United Nations organizations at the Headquarters, regional and country levels, working closely with national Governments and regional organizations to effectively address this issue. We count on the continued leadership of the Security Council in that direction.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting.

The frequency, scope, speed and severity of climate-related disasters are a source of deep concern. Such disasters occur almost everywhere, in both developed and developing countries. However, their impact on the lives of people is extremely different.

According to one of the most recent publications of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, over the past 20 years, people in the poorest nations were over seven times more likely to die and over six times more likely to be injured than the equivalent populations in the richest nations as a result of such disasters. That alone proves that our efforts must be aimed at reducing the number of deaths and injuries in disaster-affected areas.

We should also vigorously strive to address climate change, thereby contributing to fewer climate-related disasters. That, of course, must be done based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities of States, as well as the availability of related technologies.

Likewise, we should promote related multilateral instruments and institutions. In that regard, any attempt

to undermine the relevant international instruments, including by withdrawing from them, must be strongly opposed. We also underline that developing countries, in particular those that are more vulnerable to such disasters, must be empowered through capacity-building. That means the sharing of best practices, exchange of experiences and the unconditional and non-discriminatory transfer of financial resources, as well as climate-friendly know-how and technologies.

That will enable such countries not only to contribute to addressing climate change but also to being prepared so as to save more lives in the event of a disaster. Moreover, it will contribute to achieving sustainable development in those societies by removing the barriers resulting from climate change. That is the case in our region with respect to sand and dust storms, which challenge socioeconomic development in our societies. Needless to say, capacity-building efforts should be complemented by promoting regional and international cooperation.

If those are the goals that we need to achieve, they should be pursued in the relevant forums, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other such bodies, not here in the Security Council, which has neither the legal competence nor the technical capacity to address this issue. In the related meetings of the Council since 2007, there has been no consensus either among the Council members or the general membership of the United Nations stating that this issue falls within the Council's purview. Rather, it was considered by many countries as an example of the Council's encroachment upon the powers and functions of other United Nations organs. While the Council has not even been able to fully address certain serious conflicts, its insistence on delving into issues that are not proved to threaten international peace and security is incomprehensible.

We share the related concerns of small island developing States and underline the fact that their climate-related problems can be solved only through capacity-building as well as financial and technical assistance, which is beyond the competence and power of the Council. With that in mind, we urge the Council to stick to its core mandate only and to avoid making promises of solutions that it cannot ultimately fulfil.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.



**Mr. Marzooq** (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am honoured to join you, Mr. President, in participating in this open debate of the Council on addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security. This vital issue is at the heart of the international community's concerns, and I commend the Dominican Republic for having convened this debate.

We believe that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the optimal United Nations forum for discussion of such issues. However, we are concerned at the threats posed by climate change and believe that as this is a shared international responsibility, we must take the preventive measures necessary to avert such disasters and threats at all levels, which pose a challenge for the United Nations.

We believe that climate change can adversely affect the three pillars of the United Nations. The increasing temperatures at the Earth's surface pose a direct and concrete threat to our survival and would exacerbate other threats and potential disasters. These threats are more complicated in certain regions of the world, including in the Middle East, as they stand in the way of the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals in our countries.

Lack of rainfall and the unsustainable use of water sources lead to water scarcity and to further unsustainable use of resources, thus increasing the chances of migration and displacement. Everyone knows the causes of migration that ends in death.

The great rivers in my country are subject to pressure as a result of the excessive use of and control over common water resources, in the absence of effective conventions or regional frameworks for using water in a fair and reasonable way. There is a lack of respect for the provisions of international law that would preserve the rights of the countries that share such water resources.

The environmental deterioration of the Iraqi delta on the Arabian Sea is a clear example of the transformation of an ecological freshwater system rich in biodiversity and abundant in palm trees into a seawater system as a result of the shrinking of other water resources, especially freshwater resources. We would also note the destructive effects of terrorism on civilian and water infrastructure. In addition, instability and fragile socioeconomic factors have led to the spread of extremism and radicalism. That is why we need to

establish adaptation measures as part of our approach to addressing economic, political and social problems.

We commend the support provided by the international community to Iraq, which has helped us eliminate terrorism from our country. At the same time, we call for respect for our water rights, especially on the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers, in order to contribute to the maintenance of peace, security and stability.

In closing, I would note that climate change is a global phenomenon that transcends political borders. We therefore need regional and inclusive approaches that are based on international law and diplomatic initiatives to address problems between countries that share water resources. Such approaches would help us defuse any climate-related tensions and threats, eliminate terrorism and expedite reconstruction of the infrastructure, as well as promote adaptation capacity and contribute to the sustainable use of natural resources as a prelude to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

**Mr. Hilale** (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this open debate addressing an extremely important and timely issue that is having a severe impact on the future of many countries. As the Secretary-General has emphasized,

“Climate change is the defining issue of our time ... We face a direct existential threat.”

Indeed, in many regions climate change is damaging critical systems such as water, food and health security and contributing to population displacement. Climate-related disasters are also having an impact on conflicts and undermining social and economic development, in particular in countries that are heavily dependent on certain sectors such as agriculture or tourism. Moreover, slow-onset events such as sea-level rise endanger the very existence of certain States in the Pacific and Indian oceans. Those islands risk becoming uninhabitable well before they are swallowed up by the sea owing to the numerous types of storms affecting them, land erosion and ocean acidification, which erode their means of livelihood and undermine the agriculture, fishing and tourism sectors. It is therefore essential that the negative impacts of climate change be addressed not only because of their direct impact

on food security but also because they pose a threat to international peace and security.

To that end, the international community must redouble its efforts to address the threats of social and political instability, insecurity and conflicts resulting from the interaction between climate change and social, economic, demographic and political factors. It is equally necessary to invest more in strengthening the capacity of communities to enhance their resilience in the face of natural disasters.

In that context, measures are urgently required in order to minimize and mitigate the potential consequences of natural disasters. The private sector should be called upon to step up its efforts and its involvement in natural-disaster risk management activities as well as humanitarian assistance, in order to reduce needs and mobilize additional resources through planned funding mechanisms.

The Kingdom of Morocco became aware early on of the threats posed by climate change, including its threat-multiplier aspect, and adopted a proactive policy to address them. That commitment has been translated into the adoption of several sectoral strategies that place the well-being of citizens and women's empowerment at the heart of their implementation and that promote a balance between the environmental, economic and social dimensions, in line with international standards.

The Africa Action Summit, held on the margins of the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Marrakech in November 2016, was an opportunity for African leaders to coordinate and harmonize their efforts to combat climate change and to seek better solutions to the climate challenges that our continent faces. That Summit led to several initiatives, namely, the establishment of the Climate Commission and the Congo Basin Blue Fund, on the initiative of His Majesty King Mohammed VI.

During the Conference, the Security, Stability and Sustainability (3S) in Africa initiative was also launched. That initiative seeks to address the root causes of instability, which are amplified by land degradation and climate change. Through the 3S initiative, our country intends to combine leadership on climate-change issues with the African Union mandate to coordinate the migration programme in the context of African Union Commission. Moreover, during the Marrakech Conference, the Adaptation of

African Agriculture initiative was also launched. It was adopted by 27 African countries and establishes a true coalition in order to better adapt African agriculture to climate change.

Water and its proper management are also two major priorities for Morocco. The world, and the African region in particular, are facing the problem of water scarcity. The Kingdom of Morocco continues to invest in large-scale modern irrigation projects and to set up drinking water supply programmes in the most vulnerable areas. At the legislative level, the adoption of a new water law, which establishes the rules for comprehensive, participative and decentralized water resource management, has enabled significant progress to be made in anticipating and ensuring water security, especially in times of drought.

Morocco aims to become, by 2030, one of the main suppliers of renewable energies, particularly solar and wind energy, not only in the Maghreb, but also in Africa and the Euro-Mediterranean region. Although it is a low emitter of greenhouse gases, Morocco is making considerable efforts by devoting 64 per cent of the country's climate expenditure to adaptation, which is equivalent to 9 per cent of overall investment expenditure.

In that regard, the Noor power station in Ouarzazate, Morocco's first solar energy project, is the largest energy complex in the world, with a total capacity of 580 megawatts. Covering more than 3,000 hectares, the Noor power station consists of four multi-technology solar power plants. It was developed in full compliance with international standards, both technological and environmental, and is associated with a research and development platform covering more than 150 hectares.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Uruguay.

**Mr. Bermúdez Álvarez** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin my statement by congratulating the Dominican Republic on its successful presidency of the Security Council, with a substantive agenda for January. We welcome the presence of Mr. Miguel Vargas Maldonado, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, in presiding over this open debate, and we thank the briefers for their valuable briefings.

Uruguay believes that it is timely to reaffirm that climate change poses a real threat to the present

and near future for all of humankind, and as such international peace and security are also affected. The fight against climate change is a very high priority for Uruguay. My country's economy, including its export sector, is highly dependent on agricultural production, which in turn is exposed to the fluctuations of the climate and increasingly intense and damaging meteorological phenomena.

The commitment to renewable energies made over the past decade in seeking energy independence through economic and environmental policies is the best example of Uruguay's commitment to the environment and the fight against climate change. Likewise, developing countries, and in particular the States of our Latin American region, are particularly vulnerable to climate change and increasingly frequent natural disasters.

While we view this open debate as a contribution to the discussion on a priority topic for the future of life on our planet, my country believes that, in order to avoid linking climate change to security issues, the discussion of specific related topics should be restricted to the corresponding decision areas, namely, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Meteorological Organization, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change, as the international community's main multilateral instrument to meet the challenge of climate change, is irreversible, and we therefore call on all parties to defend it and accelerate its implementation. We must continue to work within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, among others, and fulfil our commitments.

Notwithstanding all this, the Security Council is very good at regularly considering the indissoluble link between climate change and the exacerbation of devastating impacts of conflict, poverty and underdevelopment. As a participant in several Security Council missions to the Sahel, the countries of the Lake Chad basin, Somalia and Haiti from 2016 to 2017, and as a result of field visits and interviews with authorities and community members, were able to see how tensions are often exacerbated by the effect of climate change.

Uruguay is convinced that adequate and flexible cooperation between the different organs, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations is crucial to addressing climate degradation processes that affect conflicts, starting with tackling their underlying causes. Secretary-General António Guterres recently stated that climate change is the definitive issue of our time. If we do not act soon, and in a coordinated and joint manner, it will be too late to combat this existential threat hanging over us all. Future generations have the right to inhabit a safe planet, ripe for sustainable development.

To conclude, we would like to underscore the importance of the climate summit, to be held in September, as a way to reinforce the commitments already made and intensify joint efforts in the fight against climate change.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations.

**Mr. Mardini:** I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important discussion today. On behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, I will share our field perspective of what we see as the double impact of climate change and armed conflict. I will also address how international humanitarian law protects the environment.

The double impact of climate shocks and armed conflict harms people's ability to cope. Climate change exacerbates vulnerabilities and inequalities, especially in situations of armed conflict, in which countries, communities and populations are the least prepared and the least able to protect themselves and adapt. Conflicts harm the structures and systems that are necessary to facilitate adaptation to climate change.

Last week, ICRC President Peter Maurer concluded an eight-day visit to the Sahel. In that area, armed conflict, deepening poverty, weakening public services and disruption of traditional means of survival are due not only to conflict but also to diminishing usable land and unpredictable water resources. He saw first-hand, just as we see in our operations in other regions, that communities facing those dual challenges are disproportionately affected. They often face growing risks of flood or drought and are forced to look for new livelihoods, change their lifestyle or move away from their homes.

We also know that in armed conflict the natural environment or civilian infrastructure is often harmed or destroyed, which can in turn have environmental consequences that can contribute to climate change. While international humanitarian law does not explicitly address climate change, it does contain rules that protect the natural environment. For instance, international humanitarian law sets out protections for vital natural resources, the exploitation of which can have implications for climate risk. International humanitarian law also protects certain natural resources, such as drinking water or agricultural areas, as objects that are indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.

When discussing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security, we must consider how climate change can multiply people's vulnerability in situations of armed conflict. Indeed, our own movement's humanitarian response must be sensitive to that growing challenge and is involving local actors in disaster risk reduction and adaptation. This year, with the support of the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, we are convening a series of climate round tables within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to address those issues. In addition, this year the ICRC's legal division is revising the 1994 ICRC guidelines for military manuals and instructions on the protection of the environment in times of armed conflict. We look forward to continued dialogue with Member States and the United Nations concerning this critical matter.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

**Mr. Elnour** (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank your friendly country, Mr. President, for convening this important debate. I also thank the briefers for their valuable briefings this morning.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by Ambassador Fatima Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union.

Armed conflicts and international terrorism are not the sole fundamental threats posed to international peace and security in today's world. The list now includes threats caused by climate and environmental changes, which represent an additional driver of the factors threatening international peace and security, thereby causing deterioration in living conditions, human security and Governments' abilities to provide

their citizens with their basic needs, particularly in situations simultaneously involving other economic, social, demographic and political challenges. We note that societies and States that are vulnerable to scarcity of resources are most exposed to the negative impact of climate change.

The Sudan is one of the States that has suffered from the impact of climate change, leading to the outbreak of conflict and complicating the resolution of conflicts, including the conflict in Darfur, which began in 2003. The main cause underlying that conflict was climate change, which led to drought, desertification and scarcity of water. The major economic activity of Darfur's population had been grazing and agriculture. Tensions arose among farmers and herders as a result of competition over scarce resources, which were diminishing due to drought and desertification throughout the entire African coastal region. That was complicated by an increase in the population, the proliferation of weapons and easy access to them as a result of conflicts in neighbouring States.

At the national level, in order to confront climate change, the Government of the Sudan has taken several measures. We have stepped up efforts to achieve peace throughout the country, as peace is the first, fundamental step towards achieving sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions. We have also striven to achieve development throughout the country, in addition to increasing hydroelectricity and seeking other sources of renewable energy, particularly solar energy, while planting more trees through Africa's Green Wall initiative, which includes a number of African States from Senegal in the west to Djibouti in the east.

In order to move forward in addressing climate-related threats, we would offer the following suggestions on how to cooperate among various actors in order to address the great challenge that faces our world.

First, we must strengthen preventive diplomacy and address the effects of climate change before they lead to conflict, while promoting cooperation among the Security Council, the Secretariat and its related agencies with respect to climate change, on the one hand, and international financial institutions, on the other. Efforts must be stepped up to implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. In that regard, my delegation hopes that the 2019 September climate

summit, to be convened by the Secretary-General on the margins of the seventy-fourth General Assembly, will be a critical juncture in our work to address climate change and its effects.

Secondly, greater attention must be paid to early-warning systems, particularly with regard to climate-related conflicts.

Thirdly, developed States must honour their pledges to developing States, thereby empowering them to achieve sustainable development and enabling them to be more resilient in facing effects of climate change.

Fourthly, efforts must be intensified to achieve peace, especially in areas affected by climate change, while increasing focus on post-conflict countries.

Fifthly, the capacities of developing countries must be strengthened in order to enable them to address climate change and adapt to environmental change while benefiting from technological advances in that regard.

Sixthly, we must promote cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations on climate issues and conflicts, and pay greater attention to the regional aspects of security threats caused by climate change.

Lastly, we must confer a greater role on peacekeeping missions, special political missions and United Nations regional offices in addressing climate change, and offer solutions at the local and national levels.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

**Mr. Sauer** (Finland): We welcome this open debate and thank the Dominican Republic for drawing our attention to this topic. We also thank the briefers for their contributions.

The threat of climate change and climate-related disasters posed to international peace and security is real. Climate change affects food and water security and multiplies risks related to conflicts and forced migration. We must tackle those global challenges in an integrated manner and strengthen the bridge linking early warning, preparedness and early action. We believe that the Security Council has a role to play in addressing this question. As the current Chair of the Arctic Council, Finland has treated climate change with its implications to the Arctic region as a priority issue.

The recent wake-up call from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is clear. An average rise in temperature of only 1.5°C degrees is still dangerous, but 2°C would be devastating. Responding to the findings of the IPCC report *Global Warming of 1.5°C*, I would like to inform the Council that, this morning in Helsinki, the Prime Ministers of the five Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden — signed a declaration to work together towards carbon neutrality.

Conflicts over natural resources, such as water, are often the root causes of armed conflict. From a conflict-prevention and mediation perspective, addressing these issues inclusively is crucial. Women are often among the first to suffer from climate change-related risks, and women's contribution to peaceful solutions is decisive. Engaging youth is equally important. We have seen encouraging examples of young people taking the lead on climate, and we should do more to support this.

Climate-related disasters cause tremendous human suffering and economic loss. While enhancing mitigation remains the most important way to reduce future risks, we must also do more to respond to storms, floods and droughts today. As attested by the briefing earlier in this meeting, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has increased the global impact of the Organization. Finland commends the role of the WMO in finding solutions to climate challenges and thereby participating in the conflict-prevention efforts of the Secretary-General. Finland has stressed the importance of hydrometeorological cooperation and facilitated collaboration between the WMO and national meteorological institutes around the globe. Our development aid in the field of meteorology is the second-highest in the world. Improved capacity to produce high-quality weather and climate information will help countries to respond to the increased climate-related risks.

In conclusion, the most important way to reduce climate-related risks in the future is to enhance mitigation. If the Paris Agreement on Climate Change is to truly deliver, we must raise the level of our ambitions. We look forward to the Secretary-General's climate summit next September, which will be an opportunity for us to show our determination to keep the increase in global temperatures below 1.5°C.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Uzbekistan.

**Mr. Nazirov** (Uzbekistan): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic for convening this open debate to address the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security, which, from Uzbekistan's perspective, is a very important and timely event given the various serious challenges in the contemporary world in protecting the environment and confronting climate change.

Today, I would like to draw the Council's attention to one of the most serious environmental disasters — the desiccation of the Aral Sea, which has caused a cascade of environmental, socioeconomic, health and humanitarian challenges for the Governments and communities in the region. The fivefold reduction in water flow from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers has decreased the volume of the Aral Sea by a factor of more than 14 over the past 50 years. Salinity levels have increased by a factor of 25, and now significantly exceed those of the world's oceans. Today, in place of once-flourishing fishing waters, a sandy salt desert of more than 5.5 million hectares is a breeding ground for dust and salt storms, carrying more than 75 million tons of dust and poisonous minerals into the atmosphere every year across thousands of kilometres.

The Aral catastrophe has exacerbated climatic conditions in the region, increasing dryness and heat in summer and extending periods of cold in the winter. According to the forecasts of experts, by 2035 to 2050, the air temperature in the region could increase by another 1.5°C to 3°C relative to current indicators. Moreover, the threatening impact of the Aral catastrophe is observed all over the world. According to international experts, poisonous salts from the Aral region are found on the coasts of Antarctica, in the glaciers of Greenland, in the forests of Norway and many other parts of the globe.

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, in his address during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly in New York in 2017 (see A/72/PV.5), drew the special attention of the world leaders to the Aral Sea crisis and emphasized the need for concerted efforts by the international community. During the summit of the Heads of the Founder States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, the President of Uzbekistan emphasized the importance of unifying efforts to overcome the consequences of the Aral catastrophe. In particular, Uzbekistan's leader put forward a number

of initiatives, including the designation of the Aral Sea region as a region of ecological innovation and technology. This initiative aimed at unifying Central Asian countries' efforts to create the conditions to attract foreign investments to develop and introduce ecological, clean technologies, ensure the broad application of the green economy, prevent further desertification, develop ecotourism and implement other measures.

At the same time, one should admit that an insufficient level of funding and coordination of activities of international financial organizations and donor countries in the Aral Sea region limit the efforts of the Central Asian States to effectively address this ecological problem. Such a situation has prompted Uzbekistan and the United Nations to establish a unified platform for mitigating the consequences of the Aral Sea crisis and ensuring the sustainable socioeconomic development of the Aral Sea region.

On 27 November 2018, at the high-level meeting held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, the Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea Region was established. It was presided over by Secretary-General António Guterres, who personally visited the Aral Sea in June 2017 and described it as one of the world's biggest man-made environmental disasters. The Trust Fund is designed to be transformative, evidence- and human rights- based, and inclusive in its goal of catalysing and strengthening a multi-sectoral and people-centred response to address its consequences. Taking into account the planetary nature of the Aral catastrophe, it is necessary to expand joint actions by the world community in this direction by implementing deeply thought-out, targeted and well-funded projects.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that the establishment of the aforementioned Trust Fund should encourage the international financial institutions and donor-countries to look anew at the Aral Sea problem and to make concerted efforts to address this global issue. For its part, the Government of Uzbekistan stands ready to closely collaborate with them and other stakeholders in mitigating the consequences of this acute ecological problem of our time.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Romania.

**Mr. Jinga** (Romania): Allow me first to commend the Dominican Republic for organizing this meeting on such an important matter.

Romania associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Climate change is not an immediate cause of clashes or disrupted peace. It acts gradually and imperceptibly. In its own way, climate change embodies the crisis to come, whose slow progress often escapes our attention but can be just as dangerous as open conflict. In the Sahel region, in Central Asia, the Middle East, the Caribbean region or the Pacific Islands, climate change and its effects are of great concern. Sometimes it is even an existential issue, as is the case for the group of small island States, which are fighting for survival, faced with the risk of submersion caused by rising temperatures.

Climate change directly impacts the number of displaced populations, food insecurity, the lack of water, drought and rising sea levels. It may also be a threat to regional stability by creating political and diplomatic tensions between neighbouring countries, internal clashes between herders and farmers, and the major displacement of populations. According to a recent report by the World Bank, 140 million people are expected to be displaced by 2050 as they seek to avoid the impact of climate catastrophes.

Climate change is now a priority for the United Nations, as underscored by the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Romania is fully committed to those cornerstone documents. In December 2018, my country participated in the twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and signed the Ministerial Katowice Declaration on Forests for the Climate and the Silesia Declaration on Solidarity and Just Transition.

During our presence in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and its successor mission, we witnessed the evolution of a humanitarian crisis having at its core climate-related security risks. Romania also stood by its friends in the Caribbean region by offering financial support to Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Kitts and Nevis right after the devastating Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Current humanitarian crises around the world demonstrate that climate-related security risks are becoming more prevalent and require integrated security, economic, political, military and environmental responses. Having a deep understanding of the multidimensional root causes of insecurity in the Sahel region, as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Romania took the initiative to build more on this topic and proposed as theme for the joint PBC-Economic and Social Council meeting on 13 November 2018 "Linkages between climate change and challenges to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, with a particular focus on the Sahel". We are very grateful that our proposal was accepted by consensus by all members of the Economic and Social Council and the PBC and that the meeting contributed to raising awareness of the adverse effects that climate change has on stability in the Sahel, of the challenges to peacebuilding in the region and of the need for coherence, cooperation and coordination in strengthening resilience to climate change.

Romania attaches great value to international cooperation, and we believe that multilateralism is the proper framework for addressing threats to international peace and security. In that spirit, we have engaged in the Group of Friends on Climate and Security as part of our commitment to maintaining, developing and achieving sustainable peace and development in an inclusive manner. Moreover, we believe in prevention and building resilience as concrete solutions.

In that regard, last month our Mission organized, here at United Nations Headquarters, a side event on strengthening preparedness against natural disaster. On that occasion, the Chief of the Romanian Office for Emergency Response presented our experience in the field of preparing institutions to respond to natural disasters and shared best practices on the protection of civilians, including the most recent exercise that took place in Romania, in partnership with the European Union and seven other States, and which involved an extensive component of international cooperation.

In conclusion, climate change not only exacerbates threats to international peace and security, but is itself a threat to international peace and security. Therefore, we believe that the international community needs to better assess the connections between climate change and security risks and to offer support to countries and regions most affected.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

**Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to begin by commending you, Mr. President, for your wise management of Council affairs during this month, and we thank you for convening this meeting. We also thank the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, the Chief Scientist of the World Meteorological Organization; and the Research Assistant at the Environmental Security Program of the Stimson Center for their valuable briefings.

Climate change is one of the foremost issues of our times. Climate change-related challenges and concerns are intensifying and therefore require a serious and effective response from the international community. This is no longer an issue of the distant future; its effects are happening on our planet right now. The planet is suffering the effects of this phenomenon, both slowly and rapidly. It is of concern in many areas, including natural disasters, threats to food and water security, the prevalence of diseases, threats to biodiversity, the scarcity of natural resources, leading to increased competition for those resources, high tensions and massive human displacement as a result of droughts, floods and the loss of traditional livelihoods, such as agriculture and fishing.

Vulnerable regions and communities, in particular small island States and arid regions, are the most threatened by the aforementioned dangers and adverse effects. However, no region — including our own, which is considered to be one of the world's most arid — is spared the negative effects of climate change. Developing countries in particular pay a heavy price when it comes to climate change. Therefore, we must step up the pace of our collective efforts to address the climate threat within the framework of the United Nations and at the international level in order to confront climate change in a systematic manner. We need to make this a priority issue across all relevant forums and international bodies, in line with their expertise and mandate.

In addition to the impact of climate change and natural disasters on socioeconomic development and human rights, there is a link between climate, peace and security. The Security Council is increasingly aware of that link, as noted in its presidential statement S/PRST/2011/15, as well as in the Council's consideration

of certain regional issues, particularly in Africa. There is a need to better understand climate-related dangers and their effect on conflicts. There is also a need to improve the collection and assessment of information, as well as early-warning mechanisms, in order to effectively respond to those threats, prevent conflict and maintain peace.

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change reflects the political will to work together to address the negative impacts of climate change. We, together with the international community, intend to fulfil the commitments arising from the Paris Agreement. The State of Qatar was honoured to host an important segment of this process, which then led to the Paris Agreement. We hosted the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and joined in the consensus reached in Poland in December 2018 at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on implementing the 2015 Paris Agreement.

In line with our commitments under the Paris Agreement, the Qatar Investment Authority is investing in climate-related funding projects. We are a founding and active member of the One Planet Sovereign Wealth Fund, established at the One Planet Summit held in Paris in 2017 to strengthen the global allocation of funds to contribute to a harmonious transition to more sustainable and low carbon economies.

The State of Qatar is interested in environmental protection, as can be seen in the environmental development projects within the framework of our 2030 National Vision. We have developed national strategies and plans to protect the environment and reduce dependence on hydrocarbons. We also have a number of national projects for clean energy and energy efficiency, including the use of solar energy. Our dependence on solar energy will account for more than 20 per cent of our use by 2030. We are making efforts to reduce carbon footprint by diversifying our revenue sources and reducing dependence on depleted energy.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar underscores its full commitment to cooperating with the United Nations and the international community to respond to all emerging threats and international challenges, in particular climate change and natural disasters, with a view to ensuring the well-being of present and future generations.



**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

**Mr. Carazo** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank the Dominican Republic for convening this open debate on this important topic, which affects us all. The Secretary-General has called climate change a defining issue of our times and a direct threat to our existence. He has warned us that “we are in trouble”.

It has been established time and again that climate change is inextricably linked to some of the most pressing security challenges, given the serious consequences of the loss of livelihood, food insecurity, environmental degradation, marginalization and socioeconomic insecurity, as well as other impacts that leave entire populations vulnerable, defenceless and more prone to disease, poverty and/or displacement to other territories. Such factors often give rise to disagreements, conflicts and even armed confrontations between countries seeking access to increasingly limited resources or control over parts of our planet that are still unregulated or have only just begun to be regulated.

Costa Rica is in an area of high climatic vulnerability. As the Chief Scientist of the World Meteorological Organization told us this morning, Hurricane Nate, in 2017, was the greatest natural catastrophe in the history of Costa Rica. We understand the situation and we are taking the necessary measures to comprehensively address the attendant challenges.

In 2017, the Comptroller General of the Republic issued a report that reveals that Costa Rica fell from forty-eighth in 2015 on the global climate risk index to ninety-first in 2017, showing a substantial deterioration in that area. Similarly, between 1998 and 2010, there have been 320 events linked to climate change. According to the same report, the annual cost of repairing and rebuilding infrastructure affected by floods, storms and droughts increased from \$14.83 million to \$337 million in the same period. The current cost of natural disasters is increasing at the rate of 3 per cent per quarter and is estimated to reach 2.5 per cent of our gross domestic product in 2025.

Against that backdrop, my country has raised the need to create a climate-specific fiscal framework that will allow for efficient investment and allocation of resources to mitigate and cope with extreme weather events, which are no longer infrequent emergencies but

recurring phenomena. Costa Rica has also designed a series of national policies and plans aimed at following through with our nationally determined contributions, as well as the National Decarbonization Plan 2018-2050, which, taken in conjunction with our national development plan, our investment plan and other key sectoral instruments, include 10 axes of decarbonization that cover the entire economy, from the agricultural and transportation sectors to the industrial, waste management and energy sectors.

It is a fact that some regions of the world are more prone than others to directly experiencing the impact of climate change. However, it is important to recognize that its effects are felt globally and at all latitudes of the planet, and that those persons and regions in situations of greater vulnerability and marginalization are always the most affected.

Similarly, it has been shown that the impact of climate change is borne disproportionately by women, who are forced to miss out on long-term educational and economic opportunities. Consequently, Costa Rica has devised a strategy known as the Coalition for All, which seeks to address gender issues in major environmental treaties and agreements, prioritizing gender equality and human rights issues in multilateral environmental agreements in a cross-cutting way. The Coalition for All already enjoys institutional support from the United Nations through the UN-Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as from a significant number of countries in different regions.

Costa Rica is convinced that if we do not take prompt and decisive action, the consequences will be devastating for everyone. The latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which we fully endorse, alerts us to the need for far-reaching action to avoid the serious consequences of climate change. Such action would also bring clear benefits for human beings and ecosystems, as well as the possibility of a more sustainable and equitable society.

We must use scientific evidence to create policies and take actions that improve our risk assessment, early warning and above all conflict analysis abilities, as well as strengthen our resilience at the national level and at the level of the United Nations, in order to better understand and address the security risks related to climate change at all levels. This requires that those issues be kept on the various agendas of United

Nations bodies and agencies, starting with the Office of the Secretary-General, and that we strengthen and harmonize coordination among organizations dealing with climate change.

Similarly, we must strengthen international cooperation on those issues, as well as inter-agency coordination and the mobilization of the relevant United Nations agencies, particularly with regard to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. In previous debates on this issue, the proposal to appoint a special representative on climate and security has emerged, a suggestion that, given the evidence, would be worth considering.

Only through concerted and institutionalized action will we, as an international community, be able to address the consequences of climate change, which, in turn, will also enable us to tackle any related security challenges.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

**Mr. Tumysh** (Kazakhstan): The delegation of Kazakhstan thanks the Dominican presidency of the Council for organizing this open debate. We commend you for the choice of this very timely and critical issue and look forward to greater awareness and action in that regard.

We also express our appreciation to today's briefers — Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, and Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo — for their comprehensive insights.

We acknowledge that the planet's climate is an ever-increasing security problem, with innumerable direct and indirect consequences in many regions of the world. We see the direct interlinkages between human insecurity and violent conflict, and between climate change and the lack of development. They are based on the vulnerability of local places and social groups, the nature of livelihoods and the role and capacity of States with regard to development and peacemaking, as well as access to natural resources that sustain livelihoods. Likewise, rising sea levels endanger the very existence of small island developing States. Sustainable development helps to mitigate climate change. It is impossible to alleviate the environmental damage without it.

In that context, Kazakhstan focuses on the problems that occur elsewhere owing to the degradation and desertification of land, the lack of drinking water and the increasingly frequent hurricanes, earthquakes, wild fires and landslides that lead to disruption, culminating in violent conflicts. We therefore are proactive by gaining a comprehensive understanding of the risks and vulnerabilities associated with climate-related disasters, by setting up early warning systems and by adopting risk reduction and disaster preparedness and management strategies. Those are reinforced by timely information-sharing and risk management through a multilateral approach among Member States, as well as the United Nations and other international organizations.

There must be better synergy among the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council as they work to implement the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement and the most recent robust set of implementation guidelines for the Paris Agreement, adopted in Katowice. We can therefore look forward to the climate summit debate in September this year for more effective road maps.

The global state of the environment in recent decades threatens all regions, including Central Asia. Kazakhstan is affected by global warming, in particular by the dramatic pace at which glaciers are melting, which greatly risks drinking and irrigation water supplies in the region being exhausted by 2050. That is a global problem experienced in Peru, Tajikistan, Nepal and many other countries. In that vein, the Central Asian Regional Glaciological Centre, established in close cooperation with UNESCO, will contribute its input to that global challenge.

Kazakhstan is also negatively impacted by the Aral Sea disaster, which gravely affects the sustainable development of the region, as also mentioned by our Uzbek colleagues. My country spares no effort in mitigating the negative effects of the dramatically shrinking Aral Sea over the past four decades. We actively engage in fruitful transboundary water cooperation among the Central Asian States within the mandate of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. Because of that laudable initiative, in recent years we have increased the area of the Aral Sea by 1,000 square kilometres and doubled its volume from 15 to almost 30 cubic kilometres. We have also recovered 19 lakes in the Aral Sea basin. However, international support is still relevant for the region.

In addition, since 2016, we have taken the lead by establishing the Central Asia Centre for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction in Almaty to mitigate the risk of emergencies and their consequences and to coordinate a joint response through regional and international cooperation. The Centre plans to act as an operating base in the event of a large-scale emergency in Central Asia. It is important to note that, together with other donor agencies and international organizations, the Centre has initiated and implemented more than 20 joint programmes and projects in the field of emergency situations and disaster risk reduction to the tune of \$1.7 million. Afghanistan has been granted observer status at the Centre. The Centre could therefore potentially become the regional centre for disaster management in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

New globalization trends imply transnational and cross-border threats, which require a new paradigm to address them. That, in turn, necessitates the transition from a country-specific to a regional strategy. Kazakhstan therefore proposes establishing a United Nations regional centre on the Sustainable Development Goals in Almaty, aimed at enhancing the synergy among United Nations agencies, regional Governments and civil society to mitigate and manage crises, build resilience and ensure sustainable development.

Kazakhstan reiterates its commitment to conserving the Earth's precious resources for the common legacy and wealth of all the peoples in the world.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

**Ms. Simonyan** (Armenia): Armenia expresses its appreciation to the Council presidency, the Dominican Republic, for initiating this open debate. Today's meeting provides a good opportunity to discuss the wide-ranging negative consequences of climate change and related disasters, as well as their immediate impact on human societies in terms of peace and security considerations. The meteorological records and climate projections provide abundant evidence of the vulnerability of ecosystems and populations and highlight the need to step up international, regional and subregional cooperation efforts for effective adaptation to climate change and disaster risk reduction.

As the world continues to experience the risk of natural disasters, including those related to the impacts of climate change, understanding vulnerability, developing capacity for effective early warning,

formulating coordinated disaster response plans and ensuring the availability of the necessary infrastructure and services will be fundamental to mitigating the risk to human lives, peace and security. The recognition of mutual dependency, a strong political will and the genuine commitment of States to cooperation are critical prerequisites for successful risk mitigation.

Located in one of the most seismically active regions of the world, Armenia is very familiar with the risk of natural disasters and their potential to cause grave destruction. Last December marked the thirtieth anniversary of the devastating earthquake that struck the northern region of Armenia in 1988, claiming the lives of more than 25,000 people, leaving tens of thousands injured and hundreds of thousands without shelter. Armenia is still suffering the aftermath of the devastation, as many families were left fragmented, communities destroyed and industries crippled, and the haunting memories remain.

Our experience has shed light on the significance of regional and global cooperation for disaster response and risk mitigation and has led our country to prioritize building resilience and strengthening national capacity for disaster preparedness. Given the vulnerabilities of its mountainous terrain and the ecosystems, Armenia's standing as a middle-income country and a landlocked developing country necessitates the prioritization of climate change and disaster risk reduction strategies. In defining our policies on climate change adaptation and mitigation, we have been guided by the ecosystem approach, in line with the principles of the green economy and with a special focus on the sectors of public life that are most vulnerable to climate change.

Last June, Armenia hosted the subregional platform on disaster risk reduction in Central Asia and the Caucasus, which brought together representatives of the Central Asian and South Caucasus countries and various stakeholders involved in development and humanitarian affairs. Three years after the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Paris Agreement, participants reviewed progress, shared insights and reaffirmed their commitment to effective multilateral cooperation for better disaster preparedness. We underline the potential of such cooperation in the broader context of promoting regional peace and security, as well as economic growth. Armenia stands ready to provide a platform for regional dialogue and to contribute to exchange and

cooperation towards better integration of disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

**Mr. Mlynár** (Slovakia): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and for having taken the initiative to hold this important ministerial-level open debate to further underscore the nexus between human and environmental security and how the Security Council can perform its functions with respect to climate-related risks to international peace and security. We are very pleased to see that, in its work, the Security Council is paying increased attention to environmental issues.

My delegation had the honour to serve on the Council as an elected member when the United Kingdom delegation first introduced this discussion in 2007 (see S/PV.5663). Since then, there has been an increase in the Security Council's consideration of climate change-related security issues. In 2017, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2349 (2017) on the Lake Chad basin, and in March 2018 resolution 2408 (2018) on Somalia, which also incorporated language on climate and security. Those are important steps in the right direction.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union. I would like to make a few additional remarks to complement that statement.

In general, it makes no difference from where the risk of conflict stems if it is real. Climate change is a very real phenomenon and a very real threat to all of us in the twenty-first century. It poses grave risks to our health, nutrition, economic growth and security and to the livelihoods of future generations. The impact of climate change has already contributed to the increased vulnerability of certain populations around the world. It is stretching the capacities of Governments and societies and driving people out of their homes.

We need climate action that is timely, concerted and sustainable in order to alleviate its negative consequences, improve energy security and protect the environment. We need to accelerate actions to implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

We welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General to bring the climate to the top of the international agenda

and his sustained political and diplomatic mobilization at the global level. Indeed, the United Nations should to the best of its ability lead in facilitating and coordinating global efforts on climate action, working with regional partners and other key stakeholders, including non-State actors such as businesses and local authorities, which play an increasingly important role in this field.

My delegation would like to encourage the Security Council to continue to identify ways of addressing the impacts of climate change on conflict and to seek the necessary policy responses in accordance with its respective purview and mandate to maintain international peace and security.

Indeed, we need an integrated response from the United Nations, including its Security Council, focusing on preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and resilience. Institutional and sectoral divides must be overcome in order to be able to work in a more integrated fashion, linking humanitarian, development, climate-mitigation and peace and security-related action.

On 27 May 2016, the United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi adopted a resolution that recognized the role of healthy ecosystems and sustainably managed resources in reducing the risk of armed conflict. We have to take further steps to more effectively address the critical threats that war and armed conflict pose to the environment and conservation efforts, as well as the role that natural resources may play in fuelling armed conflicts.

The final issue that I would like to address relates to environmental management in peace operations. It is a well-known fact that large peacekeeping operations and the number of peacekeepers deployed therein can have a potentially adverse environmental impact on the host country. We call for the full implementation of the Environment Strategy launched by the United Nations in November 2016 in this particular context. All parts of the United Nations system involved, including the Security Council, should closely cooperate to address such potential risks.

An overwhelming majority of us view climate change as the defining challenge of this era. The Secretary-General has warned us that

“Climate change is running faster than we are and we must catch up sooner rather than later, before it is too late”.

Multilateralism is a key tool that can and should deliver on global solutions, including climate change. The motto of the twenty-fourth session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Katowice, Poland, was “changing together”. With this in mind, we believe that the Security Council should make its own contribution to managing and mitigating climate change. I can assure the Council that Slovakia is fully committed to doing its part in the context of our collective responsibility in this regard.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

**Ms. Gregoire Van Haaren** (Netherlands): Allow me to warmly congratulate you, Mr. President, and the people of the Dominican Republic on your elected membership of the Security Council and for having convened this debate on an issue that, as you know, is very close to our hearts. With its membership on the Council, the Dominican Republic has an opportunity to represent the voice of the small island developing States (SIDS) — a voice that we amplified throughout our membership of the Council, as a Kingdom consisting of four autonomous countries, of which Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten are SIDS. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister of Sint Maarten, who had really wanted to be present here at today’s debate, had to cancel her trip at the last minute owing to pressing engagements.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

By organizing today’s debate on the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security, the Dominican Republic is asking Member States to address an issue that the Secretary-General deemed as the defining issue of our time: climate change. As the countries in our Kingdom are some of its closest neighbours, we welcome this focus.

The Caribbean is a region that is especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change. As the Council is aware, Sint Maarten was among the islands most heavily affected by Hurricane Irma, in September 2017. The strongest Atlantic hurricane on record, it left 70 per cent of the houses there severely damaged, forcing an unprecedented number of people into public

shelters. Today still, St. Maarteners and other Caribbean citizens are confronted with its aftermath.

The link between climate change and security is clear and undeniable. Increased risks of climate disasters mean increased threats to human security and exacerbated vulnerabilities. Today’s briefers demonstrated this by emphasizing that climate-related disasters such as hurricanes severely impact socioeconomic development and cause environmental degradation.

In this context, let me draw the Council’s attention to the “3P” approach: if we want to prevent, we need to predict and prepare. If we could predict the security implications of natural disasters, we would be one step closer to addressing such risks. It is for this reason that the Kingdom of the Netherlands has repeatedly called for an integrated risk assessment and analysis, and for the strengthening of institutional capacity in that area. Integrated risk assessments should include all threat multipliers, including water stress and climate change. During an Arria Formula meeting on water, peace and security, which we co-hosted with the Dominican Republic, among others, the World Resources Institute presented an early-warning tool to enhance such risk assessments. Tools such as these can help Governments and the United Nations system enhance risk assessment and analysis.

We welcome the progress that the Council has made to this effect and encourage it to expand this to the relevant country situations and mission contexts. Sound risk assessments would enable us to develop joint risk management strategies, in other words, prepare. The United Nations system and Member States need to be better prepared not just to identify risks, but also to strengthen operations and develop programmes accordingly. For this, it is crucial that mandates reflect the necessity for integrated risk assessment and that missions and United Nations entities are given the institutional capacity and means to do so. The United Nations should respond coherently across its pillars in order to address climate- and water-related security risks in a timely manner.

Outside of the United Nations, we need to do more to share knowledge and best practices and explore actionable responses. To that end, on 13 December 2018, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, together with the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development of SIDS and the Caribbean Community’s Caribbean Disaster Emergence Management Agency, organized

a Caribbean conference on planetary security. Its outcomes will contribute to the Planetary Security Conference to be held in The Hague on 19 and 20 February. We hope to see many of the participants in today's meeting at that Conference.

To conclude, if we predict better through early warning and prepare better through early action, we can prevent conflict. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the ultimate prevention agenda, in which addressing climate change — SDG13 — is embedded. Its security implications are as pertinent as rising sea levels, environmental degradation and the growing number of climate-related disasters affecting human security. Sint Maarteners remember all too vividly what this could lead to. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's climate summit this September. The summit is an opportunity to address all aspects of climate change, including addressing the adverse effects of climate change on international peace and security and building resilient societies through adaptation.

As the Secretary-General has said, climate change is the biggest threat that our generation faces, and we urge the Council to assign the issue the priority it deserves by calling for integrated risk assessments and encouraging climate- and conflict-sensitive programming.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belize.

**Ms. Young** (Belize): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

Allow me to congratulate the Dominican Republic, a fellow small island developing State (SIDS), on its election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, and to commend you, Mr. President, for the bold decision to start your tenure in the Security Council with a debate on a topic that encompasses an issue that is — irrefutably — a defining issue of our time.

I can say that with absolute conviction because I represent a group of countries on the front line of climate change. If the people from our islands and low-lying coastal States could sit with us here today, they would tell us about the daily challenges they are confronting to sustain their humble livelihoods: salt-water intrusion, which infiltrates their drinking water and water for irrigation; farmers forced into more debt as they try to adapt to changing rainfall patterns; fisherfolk forced to go further and further afield in order

to get even one day's catch, as marine life migrates to areas beyond their traditional grounds; and families confronting rising seas and super hurricanes denied home, work and, sadly, sometimes even their loved ones. That reality is being replicated across the globe at an alarming pace and with unprecedented impacts.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in its special report entitled *Global Warming of 1.5°C*, concluded that the effects of human-induced climate change are worse than previously projected and that the associated risks have increased immensely for our ecosystems, economies and social well-being. Therefore, what we witness in the conflicts over scarce resources, the large-scale displacement of people and loss of territory are the manifestation of the associated risks referred to in the IPCC's special report. Those are the experiences of the climate-vulnerable in our world today, whose already fragile hope for peace and security continues on a path to depletion. The IPCC findings confirm that, without drastic systems-transitions, the current human-induced global-warming trajectory will cause severe and often irreversible impacts to our planet, with inevitable humanitarian consequences.

Faced with those prospects and the impacts already having dire consequences for people and planet, we have but one urgent global imperative, and that is to act now. Our first line of response to climate change and to attenuate climate-related risks is definitive ambitious climate action in line with the science of 1.5°C.

Of paramount importance is ensuring that developing countries have the support they need to adapt, and, where our adaptive capacities have been exhausted, that we have the support to address loss and damage. We reaffirm that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its related process, including the Paris Agreement, is the primary forum for negotiating and coordinating the global response to climate change. AOSIS underscores that increased near-term ambition is urgently required to limit global warming to 1.5°C. We also underscore the urgent need for remedying the persistent funding gap for adaptation. Likewise, we emphasize the need for a strong international mechanism to address loss and damage.

We hope that the outcome of today's debate will include issuing an urgent call to the international community to take the ambitious action needed in line with the Paris Agreement goals and 1.5°C pathways. The

outcome should also involve calling upon our developed country partners to marshal the necessary resources so that developing countries, in particular SIDS, can be assured access to adequate, predictable and additional finance, technology and capacity-building.

Notwithstanding the necessary climate action and support under the UNFCCC, we must also acknowledge that climate change has multidimensional implications, even outside the purview of the UNFCCC, and therefore must be addressed in a coordinated and concerted manner across all the relevant frameworks, mechanisms and United Nations bodies. In that context, it has become increasingly necessary for the Security Council to have a more comprehensive understanding of the international peace and security risks arising from climate change and climate-related disasters, to be in a position to act appropriately.

We are pleased to note initial efforts to include climate-risk assessments in the reports of the Secretary-General to the Council, as well as efforts to provide information and training to peacekeeping operations on climate-related security-risk implications. AOSIS urges the Council to use this debate to muster the political will to ensure that these initial efforts will be standardized and improved. To that end, we propose three factors for consideration.

A preliminary factor is to ensure that the work of the Security Council in ascertaining risks is guided by the best available science on climate change, such as the IPCC assessment reports. A second related factor is the need for the analytical capacities of the United Nations system to be improved in order to assess climate-change-related security threats according to the specific circumstances, needs and situations on the ground. The third factor is the need to coordinate the work of other United Nations entities and international organizations so as to improve the United Nations system's overall capacity to support States and other stakeholders, including the most vulnerable groups, such as women, youth and indigenous communities, to mitigate those threats. In that way the United Nations system, including the Security Council, would be better positioned to identify the security threats arising from climate-change impacts, prepare for them and harness complementary roles in order to prevent escalation of those threats to the level where international peace and security is at risk.

A more comprehensive understanding of the implications of climate change on international peace and security must be seen as a critical link in the chain of a global response to climate change. That response includes actions to mitigate global warming through more ambitious emission-reduction targets, build resilience to disasters and adapt, in both the short and long term, to the impacts of climate change. Because of their interlinkages and interdependence, further steps are required to defragment the United Nations system so as to harmonize those actions and ensure that our chain of response suffers no gap or weakness.

Climate change is an issue that transcends not only nations and borders, but also customary institutional norms and mandates. It is a fundamental threat to the future of our planet and the existence of all humankind as we know it. We hope that this debate will constitute a stepping stone to reinforcing the global response to climate change, with the Security Council resolved to do its part.

I take this opportunity to inform participants of the side event entitled "Building resilience and expanding development horizons through global partnerships", which AOSIS will host on 19 February. All are invited to attend.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Tuvalu.

**Mr. Laloniu** (Tuvalu): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 12 members of the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS), namely, Kiribati, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and my own country, Tuvalu.

First, let me convey the Pacific's warmest congratulations to you, Mr. President, and to the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. I convey the appreciation of the Pacific family for the convening of this debate on how climate-induced disasters are impacting our stability, peace and security.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Belize on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States. We align ourselves also with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Nauru on behalf of

the Pacific Islands Forum members represented at the United Nations.

Climate change is a global threat to peace and security causing severe water stress, more prolonged droughts, more frequent floods, and more severe and intense cyclones. The devastating effects of more frequent and intense natural disasters are being experienced by all countries.

While the recovery and rebuilding aspects of extreme weather events are well understood, although still far from being adequately addressed, the peace and security elements are less so. As Pacific small island developing States (SIDS), we have long advocated for due recognition to be given to the security implications of climate-induced disasters and the existing threats to our very way of life. These threats are the realities that our Pacific peoples face on a daily basis.

We draw the Security Council's attention to the increasing frequency of climate-induced disasters. In the last month alone, the Pacific region has faced a number of tropical cyclones and depressions, causing severe rain and seawater flooding and damaging vital infrastructure in Kiribati, in the Republic of Marshall Islands, in Solomon Islands and in Fiji.

When small economies such as ours face sustained damage year in and year out, our economies struggle to have enough breathing space to recover. Climate-induced disasters harm our economic stability, and without urgent and serious efforts economic instability has the potential to harm stability in governance and within the wider society.

Our Pacific leaders, including those of Australia and New Zealand, in 2018 reaffirmed that climate change was the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific. Our leaders recognized the contributions of climate change to a growing complex regional security environment with the potential to harm both national and regional stability and create extreme fragility.

The Pacific SIDS have spoken about the impacts of enhanced fragility in numerous forums, and we reiterate those sentiments. The Pacific is now the global epicentre of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU). International networks use IUU for money-laundering, illicit drug trafficking and the illegal movement of peoples across the oceans.

We are addressing the Security Council to appeal to it to recognize the grave international security dimensions of the issue. For this, the Security Council needs to track and receive a clear analysis of the ongoing security implications of climate-induced disasters; the United Nations needs to focus attention on climate-security issues through a special representative; and preventive interventions need to be supported to protect small States from falling into prolonged cycles of instability.

We want to highlight the need for proper assessment and analysis. An assessment is needed on the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to the security implications of climate change. We need more information on the potentially dangerous points at the nexus of climate and security. We need assessments on ways in which we can improve our monitoring and response. We need a climate-related security risk analysis and information so that the Council is better equipped to make more informed decisions. Such information, assessment and analysis will allow the Council and the system as a whole to better position itself and allow for a targeted response that provides the necessary assistance to vulnerable countries.

It is for this reason that we have been calling for the appointment of a special representative on climate and security. Such an appointment could ensure the provision of a proper analysis and address the gaps and issues of coordination among the various bodies of the United Nations system. We reiterate our call for such a special representative, and we seek the support of all members of the Council.

Looking ahead, the challenges that are before us can be achieved only through new modes of operation. We therefore urge the Security Council not to turn a blind eye to the very real security challenges that climate change poses but to heed our call for action now.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

**Mr. Boukadoum** (Algeria): Mr. President, I would like at the outset to convey my best wishes on your presidency, which I would say has been extremely prolific and successful so far. I thank you for having initiated this open debate and for letting me share with the Council our views on the issue under consideration. I wish also to thank this morning's briefers.



First, it might seem awkward for the Security Council to take into consideration the effects of climate-related disasters and climate change on international peace and security. The Security Council has numerous issues on its agenda, and a great deal is expected of it in terms of action and efficiency in preventing conflicts and resolving existing ones. We might think that it is natural for the Council to focus on them rather than on opening new, undefined territories for consideration.

Second, we believe that the link between climate and international peace and security is not remote, and we are witnesses, including in my geographical area, to the fact that climate change has without a doubt had negative and dangerous effects in Africa and the Mediterranean region, considered as hot spots by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Third, I want to point out specifically that while Africa, our continent, is the least responsible for anthropogenic climate change, it is the continent that suffers the most from such perilous hazards as desertification, land degradation, drought, sea-level rise and ocean acidification. Not only regions such as the Sahel but also small island developing States are directly impacted by such adverse consequences. Ignoring that the situation has had repercussions on those already poverty-prone populations would be a tragic mistake. Humankind fought for food and shelter in ancient times, and humankind will continue to fight for water, food and shelter when these are rare and when access to requirements to meet basic needs is for any reason denied.

Fourth, it is obvious to us that this situation of poverty and scarcity of resources is an open door to all maleficent groups, including terrorist and criminal groups, to thrive as they are doing in the Sahel. It is clear also that this dangerous situation will continue to push the various peoples affected to leave their dwellings and embark on a forcible migration, generally north-bound, where they believe resources are richer and the land more secure, giving rise to all the tragedies that we are all witnessing today, such as that in the Mediterranean.

Fifth, the situation is a complex one and involves a large number of stakeholders. For the Security Council, the question is simple: do climate-change-induced natural disasters provoke conflicts, or do conflicts prevent us from tackling environmental issues and development in the areas concerned?

Sixth, it is our view that it is not illegitimate to think that the Security Council has a role, a mission and a responsibility that are yet to be defined. In fact, the Security Council embarked on this journey in 2011 with its first presidential statement on this issue (S/PRST/2011/15), and I remind Council members that it rightfully pointed then to the responsibilities and mandates of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. I cannot but recall that we have committed ourselves, as the international community, to tackle the issue through the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It is important to recall that the 2011 presidential statement mentioned that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) had a role and responsibility as “the key instrument for addressing climate change” (S/PRST/2011/15, *third para.*). It is still our view that the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC is the best framework to address the issue through commitments that must be respected.

Seventh, my country continues to advocate for the prevention and solution of conflicts by tackling their root causes, be they political, economic, social and — yes, today it has to be said as clearly as possible — environmental roots. The question at stake is multifaceted. It is true that we are still at odds when it comes to defining the notion of “impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security”, which has to clearly be clarified in some way. In the meantime, work at this juncture — and, I should say, our homework — must start through prevention and cooperation and always bear in mind that no one is immune from the effects of inaction or indifference.

I would cite as a blatant example the case of my continent, Africa. It has been rightfully mentioned this morning that there is a link between the depletion of Lake Chad and terrorist-related activities. It is obvious that terrorist and criminal groups have found fertile terrain. The scarcity of resources leaves no other way to the populations than forced migration or falling into the hands of the rogue groups. At this juncture, the legitimate question is: What we can do and what specific role does the Security Council have to play?

First, we must rely on and cooperate and act jointly with regional organizations, and in our specific case the African Union. The mechanisms are now in place. I strongly suggest that in the Security Council’s meeting with the African Union Peace and Security Council, an agenda item on the effects of climate-related disasters on peace and security be discussed. Secondly, with respect

to prevention, mechanisms like the African Union, but also such subregional entities as the Economic Community of West African States and peacekeeping operations, are perfectly fit for the purpose of at least informing the Security Council of what they believe to be the effects of climate change. Thirdly, we have to rely on the work, including the analytical work, of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the Resident Coordinators of the new United Nations Development System.

I would finish by calling for a clear stocktaking defining ways to move ahead with the issue.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

**Ms. Nusseibeh** (United Arab Emirates): I would like to join others in congratulating the Dominican Republic on assuming the presidency of the Security Council, and for bringing this important matter to the attention of the Council. The length of the speakers list today attests to the importance of this issue to many Member States. As others have said, there is no doubt that climate change is the defining issue of our time, and I would like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Miguel Vargas Maldonado, for convening today's critical discussion, and this morning's briefers for their presentations.

The United Arab Emirates is committed to climate action and we eagerly await the Secretary-General's climate summit later this year. We applaud his leadership and his tireless work to fight climate change. We are therefore proud to be hosting the summit's preparatory meeting in June in Abu Dhabi, as announced by the Secretary-General yesterday.

Climate change has long ceased to be a concern only for environmentalists. Coping with climate change — or “adaptation”, in the words of experts—is now a fact of life as United Nations Member States face extreme temperatures, increasingly intense natural disasters and climate-influenced human migration. This adaptation is furthermore often synonymous with humanitarian relief and planning.

Though not strictly a security issue in the traditional sense, as many have said here today, and while other matters discussed before the Council are equally important to us, we must recognize that climate change will worsen existing security concerns in the future and, potentially, create new ones. In fact, military experts in

many countries concluded long ago that the changing climate poses existential threats of displacement and extinction to some nations. Furthermore, food and water insecurity, the loss of shelter, the deterioration of livelihoods and the sense of powerlessness in the wake of repeated disasters create breeding grounds for desperation, extremism and, therefore, instability.

The United Arab Emirates is deeply concerned over the impact of these pressing climate-related challenges, not only within our own borders but around the world, because we know that the security of our country is contingent on the security of others, and because we know that this is actually an issue that we can collectively tackle together. In the Pacific and Indian Oceans, climate change poses a threat to the very survival of many small island States, so if we fail to act on climate change a number of these countries could be continually devastated or even submerged under water, triggering population movements and creating new challenges around territorial control and integrity.

Addressing the link between climate change and international security does not necessarily require a change in the mechanics of the Security Council, but we should do more to reframe climate action. Curbing greenhouse gas emissions and funding livelihoods in drought-stricken regions, though traditionally regarded as development or humanitarian matters, are in fact investments in security and should be understood as such.

In general, Member States, donors and the United Nations system need to explicitly target insecurity through climate action. This could come in the form of commitments to scaling up development work in places that are most likely to experience climate-linked insecurity or are already experiencing it. For example, many of the countries vulnerable to climate change have high unemployment rates, particularly among young people. Targeted development and humanitarian work that provides livelihoods, education or training could mitigate the risk that climate-related unemployment contributes to insecurity.

Similarly, Member States, donors and the United Nations system could combine their existing efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions with a renewed effort to build resilient infrastructure in climate-vulnerable communities. For example, using solar energy to power health centres, schools and businesses could simultaneously mitigate climate change and factors that contribute to insecurity.

Donor countries and international development agencies could also allocate their funding based on scientific models that predict where climate disasters are likely to occur. Forecast-based financing can build resilience in at-risk communities and contain the fallout of a natural disaster that triggers insecurity and population migrations. These are the kind of practical options and possible commitments we hope to showcase at the climate summit preparatory meeting in June in the United Arab Emirates. We very much look forward to welcoming all Member States there.

Today's meeting is proof that the link between climate change and insecurity is real and is recognized as such by the international community. It demands concrete action and attention from this Chamber.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mauritius.

**Mr. Soomauroo** (Mauritius): I commend the Dominican Republic for the initiative of convening this open debate focused on addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security. We are particularly appreciative of the concept note (S/2019/1, annex), containing pertinent questions that have guided our discussion today. We are very pleased to see a fellow small island developing State chairing this important meeting.

Mauritius aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Belize, Ambassador Lois Young, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States. I also wholeheartedly thank the participants for their enlightening testimonies and briefings this morning.

Bringing climatic change discussion to the Security Council has been a major challenge, but taking decisions that will require Member States to take proactive decisions is an even greater challenge. We therefore welcome this opportunity to sincerely hope that the President's summary will lead to a concrete action plan that Member States will eventually implement.

For small island developing States, climate change represents an existential challenge because of their specific vulnerabilities. However, no country is immune to the perils of climate change. The wide participation of countries large and small in today's meeting is testament to the importance that we all attach to the subject. Addressing climate change is everyone's responsibility. It is not only an environmental or development issue but also a complex

threat to the peace, stability and sustainability of our planet, causing humanitarian disasters, contributing to political violence and undermining the capacities of Governments. The potential of climate-related migration and displacement to cause conflict and pose a threat to international peace and security cannot be overstated. Such a threat can only be properly addressed through greater cooperation, global leadership and shared responsibilities. The Security Council is therefore the appropriate platform to address this threat to the security and prosperity of the globe.

We all watched with great hope the historic breakthrough of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We must, however, concede today that progress has been largely inadequate. Climate-related events all over the planet are worsening and becoming apocalyptic. The era of unprecedented global warming is upon us. A recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has confirmed that the climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth are projected to worsen with global warming of only 1.5°C.

As far as my country is concerned, all the climate-related indicators are showing signs of deterioration. Rising air temperatures and sea levels, falling levels of annual rainfall and precipitation, the erosion of beaches — a major pillar of our economy — grim projections of water stress and the possible decline of our agricultural production may all imperil our livelihood and stability.

We cannot agree more with the Secretary-General when he says that climate change is a defining issue of our time. Unfortunately, we see that humanity is losing the race against climate change. Now the time has come for us to go beyond words. For us, the Security Council remains part of the solution to such a vexing problem.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank everyone, especially the briefers.

I think this has proved a good forum and a successful debate, in which 82 representatives spoke, expressing their views. Some countries still do not understand how developing countries like ours feel. We live in fear that we will either disappear or be hit by a natural disaster that knocks our economies back 10 or 15 years. I hope that we will continue raising our voices loud and clear until they are heard.

*The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.*