



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8577th meeting
 Wednesday, 17 July 2019, 3 p.m.
 New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru)

Members:

Belgium	Mrs. Van Vlierberge
China	Mr. Wu Haitao
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Moriko
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
France	Mr. De Rivière
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
Poland	Mr. Lewicki
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
South Africa	Mr. Matjila
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
United States of America	Ms. Norman-Chalet

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda

Letter dated 27 June 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/539)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda

Letter dated 27 June 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/539)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth; Ms. Wevyn Muganda, Programme Coordinator of HAKI Africa; and Ms. Sofia Ramyar, Executive Director of Afghans for Progressive Thinking.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/539, which contains the text of a letter dated 27 June 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Peru 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. Wickramanayake.

Ms. Wickramanayake: Since my last briefing to the Security Council in April 2018 (see S/PV.8241), I have had the opportunity to travel to many parts of the world and meet young people from all walks of life. From the refugee camps in Jordan, to schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in Gaza in the Gaza Strip, to municipalities in Kosovo, to youth councils in Denmark, I have seen and heard one thing — young people care about peace.

However, young women and men still suffer from stereotypes, myths and policy panics that diminish their agency and prevent them from realizing their full potential for peace. Unfortunately, contrary to reality, the narrative is still dominated by a focus on the small minority of young people attracted to extremism and

violence and fuelled by the victimization of young people, especially young women.

The overarching consequence of these negative stereotypes is that they contribute to the marginalization and stigmatization of youth by framing young people as a problem to be solved and a threat to be contained. This detrimentally skews youth, peace and security programmatic responses towards hard security approaches and away from prevention — ignoring the fact that most young people, in fact, are not involved in violence.

That is all the more reason why we need to keep going back and referencing resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), so that in this increasingly globalized world shaped by pervasive concerns about terrorism, organized crime and extremist violence, we can make sure that perspectives on youth are not distorted by contagious stereotypes that associate young people with violence.

Allow me to thank the Government of Peru for its leadership in convening this important Security Council briefing on youth, peace and security. I am pleased to be joined by two young women peacebuilders — Ms. Wevyn Muganda from Kenya and Ms. Sofia Ramyar from Afghanistan — as we take stock of the progress made in the youth, peace and security agenda.

Today, there are 1.8 billion people in the world — the largest generation of young people ever. Some 90 per cent of them live in developing countries, where they make up a large proportion of the population. With a global median age of 29.7 years, it is estimated that 408 million young people today live in contexts affected by armed conflict.

Moreover, around the world, today's young generation faces enormous challenges. One in five young people is not in employment, education or training; every year millions of girls become mothers while they are still children themselves; and mental health issues among young people are on the rise. Without action to address inequality, intolerance and the climate emergency that faces us all, this generation of young people could face devastating repercussions. It must be clear therefore that we need to engage young people not only as beneficiaries, but as equal partners in our efforts, especially in our efforts to prevent conflict and build peace.

Since the release of *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security* last September, the agenda has entered a new phase, increasingly shifting the focus towards implementation at multiple levels while also expanding stakeholder support. Let me focus on a few key issues.

First, young people are reclaiming the narrative on youth, peace and security. Despite myths, misconceptions, fake news, stereotypes and claims that presume them to be and portray them as troublemakers, young people are resisting, protesting, organizing and implementing youth-led peacebuilding initiatives in their communities and countries to bring back democratic values, good governance and transparency in institutions in the places they live. They are not waiting to be invited to join decision-making tables; they are bringing alternative, innovative solutions to solve those global problems.

However, in the past months, I have noticed with grave concern incidents of young peacebuilders and young human rights defenders being subjected to threats, intimidation, violence, arbitrary arrest and retaliation by State and non-State actors. I would like to recall and remind us all with great emphasis that protection is an integral part of resolution 2250 (2015). I call on Governments and all parties to uphold and protect the fundamental rights of young people, including their freedom of expression both online and offline.

Secondly, the youth, peace and security agenda is being recognized and institutionalized within the United Nations as core to the United Nations priorities on youth. The United Nations Youth Strategy, Youth 2030, which was launched by the Secretary-General in September 2018, identifies peace and resilience-building as one of its five core priorities for the United Nations system's work with and for young people.

With this first ever United Nations Youth Strategy, we have set out on a new path and will support young people in all their diversity in accessing education, decent work, social protection and health care, while we will stand with young people when they oppose injustice and will work with them to prevent conflict and build peace. In doing so, the United Nations system will promote an enabling environment that recognizes young people's important and positive contributions to peace and security, while creating safe spaces and expanding opportunities for young people.

To support the implementation of the peace and resilience-building priority of the United Nations Youth Strategy, a joint United Nations action plan is being developed under the leadership of the joint United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) secretariat on youth, peace and security, bringing together other United Nations system partners. This joint action plan focuses specifically on strengthening policy support, implementation, monitoring and review at the local, national and regional levels. PBSO, UNFPA and the United Nations Development Programme are furthermore developing a joint global programme to support field and regional-level implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda in the five geographic regions.

Furthermore, we are seeing a surge in programming and funding in United Nations entities. For instance, \$37 million have been allocated by the Peacebuilding Fund since 2016 through its Youth Promotion Initiative, a special fund dedicated to supporting projects fostering youth inclusion and participation. Nonetheless, we continue to fall far short of meeting the needs of youth organizations and networks on the ground, which often operate on minimal financial and other resources.

Thirdly, the United Nations peace and security pillar is increasingly engaged in implementing resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) with special political missions and peace operations involved in numerous activities. For instance, the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia organized dialogues with youth representatives from different political parties in various regions, focusing on discussing the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. As a result, there are new inter-party youth pacts to reject violence in the context of the upcoming local elections. I commend the Mission for establishing a network of youth focal points across its field offices to support the implementation of the Mission's youth engagement strategy.

To promote peaceful coexistence and support youth participation in peacebuilding and stability in Iraq, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq engages youth across the country on issues relating to tribal conflicts, unemployment, State control of arms and youth inclusion in decision-making and political processes.

Across the African continent, from West Africa and the Sahel to Somalia, United Nations missions are stepping up their efforts to engage young people and youth organizations in consultative processes and dialogues aimed at preventing conflict and advancing peace, while supporting efforts to build the capacities of youth organizations and networks to participate in decision-making processes.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, through its Prevention Academy project, is building linkages with youth throughout Central Asia as a means of creating a culture of prevention among young people.

Inspired by the impressive work done by the youth focal points in our missions in Colombia, Kosovo and Somalia, I encourage all United Nations political and peacekeeping missions to appoint and allocate youth focal points to effectively implement youth, peace and security agendas within their respective mandates.

Fourthly, since the adoption of resolution 2419 (2018), the importance of young people's participation in peace processes has garnered increased international attention. As a first step in that process, the first International Symposium on Youth Participation in Peace Processes was held in March in Helsinki and co-hosted by the Governments of Finland, Qatar and Colombia. The Symposium analysed how young people have influenced peace processes and mediation efforts using diverse and innovative approaches. From participating in peace negotiations as delegates of the parties of conflict to monitoring ceasefire agreements to addressing local-level disputes, from drafting and shaping peace deals to using technology and social media to reach broader constituencies, young people have shaped peace processes in countries such as Colombia, South Sudan and the Philippines.

I am therefore pleased to use this opportunity to officially announce the launch of a key outcome of the Symposium: the global policy paper entitled *We Are Here: An integrated approach to youth-inclusive peace processes*, which includes a foreword by the Secretary-General. The paper evaluates young people's participation and inclusion in peace processes that have taken place over the past 20 years from young people's own points of view. It highlights that their roles in peace processes often build relationships between the formal and informal realms of peace negotiations, making mediation efforts that otherwise take place

behind closed doors more open, inclusive and, thereby, sustainable.

However, there are still massive gaps in meaningfully including young people in peace processes at all levels and documenting young people's roles in peace negotiations and mediation efforts. The symposium concluded with a set of recommendations to address those gaps and will serve as a useful tool to all stakeholders, especially mediators on the ground.

It is encouraging to note that, at the country level, youth groups are already testing and validating some of those recommendations. In Cameroon, under the leadership of young peacebuilders, over 600 young mediators are being trained to step up and support community level negotiations. Last weekend, 30 young Libyans representing minorities from Amazigh, Tabu and Tuareg communities, including young people with disabilities from all regions of the country, gathered to discuss topics pertaining to peace, people, prosperity, planet and partnerships. I hope that this is the beginning of a process that will continue to inspire their leaders with regard to concrete actions to bring lasting peace.

I am also pleased to note that the State of Qatar has already committed to hosting a second symposium in 2020 in Doha, focusing especially on young women's participation in peace processes. I hope that this will be a good opportunity to further explore the interlinkages between resolutions 2250 (2015) and 1325 (2000).

Lastly, the report of the Secretary-General on youth, peace and security will be presented to the Security Council by May 2020.

The successful implementation of resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) requires further support, including political will and ownership from Member States, funding for programming, institutional support for capacity-building and prioritization. Achieving lasting peace is not an elitist cause that Governments, politicians, the United Nations and other institutions can or should undertake alone. Sustainable peace cannot be achieved at the cost of social inclusion. Our efforts to build and sustain peace need to be democratized to include the communities most affected. Young people are our best chance for succeeding at that.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Muganda.

Ms. Muganda: My name is Wevyn Muganda. I am a 25-year-old activist working at HAKI Africa, a national human rights organization based in Mombasa, Kenya. It is an honour to brief the Security Council today, and I commend the presidency and other Member States for prioritizing youth, peace and security and inviting young briefers to this meeting.

Young people are agents of change. The revolutions of today are led by young men and women like me, who have put themselves at the front lines to ensure that we live in a more peaceful, just and inclusive society. We acknowledge the urgent need to take charge of our future. That is why resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) on youth, peace and security, if fully implemented, have the power to transform the lives of young people and societies.

HAKI Africa has engaged thousands of young people on human rights and peacebuilding efforts. That has been achieved through human rights education; youth-led social activities with justice actors and youth reintegration in communities; and support to the formulation and implementation of legislative and policy frameworks, such as the Mombasa County Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, in partnership with communities, including young people, the national Government and the county Government of Mombasa.

There can be no peace without justice, which is why in the quest for transitional justice, we partnered with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution, in Kenya, to conduct public enquiries into the cases of the extrajudicial killings of 136 people on the coast of Kenya, which took place from 2012 to date, with most victims being young people.

The seminal progress study on youth, peace and security, *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security*, presented in this Chamber last year (see S/PV.8241), rightly identifies injustices and the lack of human rights as key contributors to the violence of exclusion. So often, young people are seen as just victims or perpetrators, rather than as citizens and key partners for peace.

Our biggest challenge lies not just in rehabilitating young people, but also in partnering with the majority of young people, who, as we all know, are not interested in violence. That should be done by fostering a conducive environment that allows for their meaningful participation in decision-making. It also means

supporting young people to become the difference and to make a difference as peacebuilders themselves and through their organizations, movements and networks.

I spend my Sunday afternoons with young people in our chill spots. In Mombasa, we call them *maskanis*, in reference to the informal spaces where young people gather during their free time. Research has shown that the police have been accused of going to those spaces to harass, illegally arrest and, in some instances, solicit bribes from young people. Those are also spaces that extremist groups can use to recruit some young people. But, more importantly, it is also in those spaces that HAKI Africa has identified the most powerful young influencers and activists. We have invited many young women and men to participate in trainings on human rights, peacebuilding and leadership, and they have become peacebuilders who are leading local initiatives, for example, on community policing. To reach the most vulnerable and marginalized, we must go to the places where young people are, spend time there and move away from town halls and formal workshops.

I love the Internet. The Internet is where I socialize, learn and get entertained. It is also where I publish youth-friendly articles on human rights, social cohesion and active citizenship. That includes presenting alternative narratives to violent extremism through my blog *Beyond the Lines* and accessible pieces on national and local instruments, such as Kenya's strategy to counter violent extremism. To date, the blog has reached over 110,000 young people and has helped build an online community of peacebuilders and active citizens.

KauliZetu Mtaani is a Swahili phrase that means "our opinions in the hood". It is also a personal initiative that I started this year to amplify the excluded voices of young people by filming the debates and conversations in *maskanis* on social issues and sharing them online. I believe that every voice should be heard. Every voice counts.

My experience is one of many young human rights defenders and peacebuilders working locally. As part of the '16x16' initiative of the United Nations Development Programme Youth Global Programme, I have joined a group of impressive young activists from around the world who lead organizations, movements and networks that contribute to advancing Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies. We have received incredible support and have had opportunities to engage meaningfully with a

range of partners, locally and internationally. We need more initiatives like that, which can truly strengthen youth agency.

While progress has been made to implement the youth, peace and security agenda, we still have to create an enabling environment for peacebuilding and ensure that young people can truly be in the driver seat of peace and security. I urge Member States to fully implement resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018). In my view, the three key steps that should be taken are the following.

First, the participation of young people in decision-making processes at all levels should be enhanced, including by listening to the voices of local actors.

Secondly, the human rights of all individuals should be protected, with a particular focus on youth, especially young women and sexual minorities, human rights defenders and peacebuilders.

Last but not least, greater accountability and regular reporting in the Security Council on how well it is doing with and on youth should be ensured.

Resolution 2250 (2015) has secured me and my young peers a seat in the car. We are deeply excited about the journey, and that is why we need to be in the driver's seat to reach our destination. We want to take charge, and we want to drive forward. Will the Security Council lead with us?

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Ramyar.

Ms. Ramyar: Many people dream of seeing helicopters or riding in one; I pray to God I never see one again. They remind me of the tragic moment in my life during the civil war when a helicopter dropped a bomb on our home in Kabul and destroyed its floors in 1995. Traumatized and scared, my siblings and I found each other safe in the yard after the dust settled, and we started to look for other members of our family.

I thank you, Mr. President, for your kind invitation to me to brief the members of the Security Council. It is such an honour to be here; it is a dream come true. Please allow me to outline my speech today. I will share why I have a passion for peace, introduce the large youth-led organization that I lead, talk about how resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) support my work and

explain what it is like to be a leader in Afghanistan as a young woman. I will conclude my speech with a few modest recommendations for the United Nations.

My passion for peace traces back to the tragic experience I just narrated. War forced my family to flee to Pakistan and live in a refugee camp, without papers and away from our homeland, when I was only 4 years old. That war continues until today, and my story is being recreated every single day in other people's lives. Life in refugee camps stirred a desire in me to work for peaceful coexistence in Afghanistan, where all citizens can enjoy their basic human rights, access quality education and contribute positively to society.

I could not wait to return to Kabul, rebuild our home, enrol at a local school and prepare myself to pursue my vision. The creation of a democratic Afghanistan in 2001 allowed me to come back to the country and to work through the challenges of the war for a peaceful country. I joined Afghans for Progressive Thinking (APT), which was founded by an Afghan youth in the belief that youth are not just victims or perpetrators of violence but an active contributor to peace processes. I joined the organization and became Executive Director in 2014.

In a male-dominated Afghan society, my leadership has not been accepted or respected by most men. That experience has also stirred a passion in me to also seek theories and practices to challenge the existing prejudices among people towards women's leadership. The result of our work is that there are now more women taking leadership positions and are being supported by men at the same time.

Youth form the majority of the Afghan population, and they are strategically placed in the society to create change in their communities and to push for structural changes at the policy level, particularly at this important juncture of our society now that we are closer to a peace agreement than ever before.

I want to affirm that the youth, peace and security agenda is preparing a generation of young men and women in Afghanistan that will lead our country towards peace, development and prosperity.

The organization that I lead — Afghans for Progressive Thinking — is one concrete example of an entity that has been encouraged by the United Nations policy positions to work for peace in Afghanistan. Being a woman who works to create peace in Afghanistan

has never been easy but the motivation that I have received from our partners, particularly the United Nations partnership with our umbrella organization, the United Network of Young Peacebuilders, and the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, have given me the energy to pursue my vision with confidence.

Young Afghan women and men have the potential to lead our country and create not only a peaceful Afghanistan but also a stable region, in which our country's unique geographical location serves as a bridge for ideas, ambitions and cooperation. With that belief and vision, at APT we work to promote critical thinking and a culture of peace among young Afghans.

Since APT's inception in 2011, more than 20,000 youth and university students have participated in our activities, most of whom come from the rural parts of the country. Also, as a leading organization in the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015), we have held many debates and dialogues that support its implementation in Afghanistan since 2015 and have worked with the Government of Afghanistan on a practical action plan for the youth, peace and security agenda.

I would like to take the opportunity to recognize and appreciate the positive efforts of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to include young people in decision-making processes, including efforts to allow them to assume leadership positions. Ambassador Adela Raz, who is a young Afghan woman serving as Afghanistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, is a testament to how far Afghans have come along. Nonetheless, the notions of exclusion and hierarchical relationships between men and women and elders and youth still dominate the societal, cultural, political and economic landscape across Afghan society. That needs to change.

On behalf of APT and the Afghan youth, I am pleased to thank the Security Council for adopting resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018). My colleagues and I had the honour to partner with the United Network of Young Peacebuilders on behalf of the Afghan youth and advocate for resolution 2250 (2015) until it was adopted in 2015.

Subsequent to our activities to implement the resolution, along with the Government of the Netherlands represented in Kabul and with the support of the Afghan Government and the United Nations

Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, APT pioneered an initiative to select the first-ever Afghan Youth Representative to the United Nations last year. This year, we are working closely with the Embassy of Germany in Kabul to select the second Afghan Youth Representative, whom the Council will meet later in the year. Let me conclude by stressing the following points.

First, the United Nations needs to take a long-term approach and develop policies that make youth an integral part of the decision-making process. The inclusion of youth in the Afghan Government in the past few years has been encouraging but it is not sustainable.

Secondly, young people must be allowed to play a key role in the peace process in Afghanistan, from the negotiation stage to the implementation. Since the youth forms the largest segment of society, we have the highest stake in the process.

Thirdly, youth must be seen as an equal partner, not as project implementers or grantees.

Fourthly, the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth is uniquely positioned to encourage national coalition and strategies with regard to resolution 2250 (2015) and to evaluate the effectiveness of their implementation. Well-established local youth organizations will be ideal partners for that activity.

I wish to affirm once again that the young Afghans whom the Council has met in settings such as today's are testament to a new Afghanistan — a partner to the global community. We desire to move forward, not backwards. We thank the Security Council for partnering with our people, particularly the youth, in our vision to create an inclusive and peaceful Afghanistan.

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

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

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for using your presidency today to highlight this issue and organize this briefing on youth, peace and security. May I also thank our briefers very much. It is very valuable and important to hear directly from representatives not only of civil society but also of the youth — two groups that are more important to our work but which we in the United Kingdom want to see participating meaningfully in decision-making on issues connected with peace and security.

I was particularly impressed by what I heard from Ms. Muganda about the work of HAKI Africa, in particular with regard to taking concrete actions on the ground towards peacebuilding. I believe that she said not just in the classroom but real action, and I think that that is really very important and impressive.

May I also welcome the global policy paper, which was commissioned by the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth. We look forward to the Secretary-General's upcoming report to build further on recommendations to implement resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2419 (2018).

The importance of youth participation in addressing the world's most pressing challenges, including conflict, which is the business of the Council, really ought to be self-evident. More than half of the world's population is now below the age of 30 and, looking around the Council table, it is fair to say that not all of us around the table are below the age of 30. These are therefore voices that must not be ignored and it is only by taking in the views of the youth, including in the Council, that we can properly account for the diversity of perspectives and the long-term vision that we need in order to defend and promote human rights and develop sustainable political, economic and social solutions to such challenges.

One of the things that United Kingdom regularly highlights in the Chamber is the importance of an inclusive political process when it comes to conflict prevention and conflict resolution because we know that when peace processes are inclusive, they are one third more likely to be sustainable. Greater sustainability is crucial to ongoing peace.

I therefore agree very much with what Ms. Ramyar said — she was referring particularly to the situation in Afghanistan but I think it is applicable more widely — about the importance of youth having a role in peace processes and being heard and listened to. That is vital to the future of such countries because their future is represented in youth.

I also thought what she said, if I may, about the prejudice that she had suffered as a young woman was really quite revealing. I think that we would say in the United Kingdom that young women have a key role to play in that area. In conflict and in post-conflict contacts we see the engagement of young women as instrumental. We see it all the time in building coalitions, mediating

local ceasefires, repairing community relations and challenging and changing the status quo.

Mediation is an issue that we have discussed regularly before, but allow me to say that we are extremely proud of the fact that we, the United Kingdom, together with fellow members of the Commonwealth support the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth initiative. We were able to support members of that network to participate in a youth forum in Nairobi this year, which addressed the lack of young women's representation in mediation processes and how we can overcome such barriers. The Women Mediators across the Commonwealth now has nine members under the age of 35, who are supported to resolve conflicts in their communities, and we are committed to ensuring that more young mediators are in that network.

When we consider instability in regions across the world, it is clear that meeting the aspirations of young people is crucial in defending and promoting human rights, resolving conflict and sustaining peace. Young people are an incredible mobilizing force to drive political change, which is further enabled through the use of social media and technology, as we have seen recently in the Sudan, for example.

We must ensure that young people are able to live to their full potential. In July 2018, the United Kingdom launched the \$75-million second phase of our Girls' Education Challenge, which will support 70,000 girls and train 1,000 young women to teach in remote areas. We are also one of the largest bilateral donors to Education Cannot Wait, which was launched at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit to protect access to education for children and youth in conflict zones. We urge others in the international community to support that initiative. Once again, that is all part of peacebuilding, conflict prevention and post-conflict stability.

Sadly, there are of course instances in which young people find themselves in situations of great danger. In November, the United Kingdom will host an international conference on preventing sexual violence in conflict, under the theme "Time for Justice: Putting Survivors First", and we are ensuring that the voices of youth survivors will play a crucial role in that meeting.

Let me conclude by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this debate, and our briefers for coming here and for their wise words. I heard the Special Envoy

say that the title of her paper is *We Are Here*. Well, she is certainly here today in the Council, and she is heard.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am delivering this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council: Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa and Equatorial Guinea.

At the outset, we express our gratitude to the Peruvian presidency for convening this important debate on the implementation of resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), on youth, peace and security. We are also grateful for the informative briefings made by Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ms. Muganda and Ms. Sofia Ramyar, who reminded us that most of the world's young people want to contribute and are contributing to achieving lasting peace and development for all.

We welcome the initiatives of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which, during its membership in the Security Council in 2015, presided over the adoption of the historic resolution 2250 (2015), and the important role played by Peru in promoting the youth, peace and security agenda, especially with regard to the adoption of resolution 2419 (2018). Both resolutions demonstrate the prioritization of young people in the adoption of an international governance framework and recognize and legitimize the efforts of young people in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

We recall that the first International Symposium on Youth Participation in Peace Processes, held earlier this year, highlighted critical issues on how to advance youth participation in peace processes. In that regard, we also emphasize the participation of young people in innovative projects that help them in large measure to remain actively engaged and far removed from vulnerable situations, such as those involving exploitation, radicalization and recruitment by extremist, criminal and armed groups. One such example involves a pilot project with the participation of former combatants in ecotourism initiatives in Colombia. It is imperative that the Council discuss in depth how national Governments and interregional bodies can be supported to ensure the full implementation of resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) at the national level.

It is estimated that more than 600 million young people worldwide, of whom a large number live in Africa, currently live in fragile and conflict-affected areas. The African continent has the world's youngest population, with more than 400 million young people

between the ages of 15 and 35. Putting young people at the centre of our development commitments and priorities is critical, as youth networks across the continent are mobilizing youth groups and ensure their full and active participation in the work being done to harness the demographic dividend.

The African Union has developed various youth development policies and programmes at the continental level to ensure that the continent benefits from its demographic dividend. The policies include the African Youth Charter, the African Youth Decade 2009-2018 Plan of Action and the Malabo Decision on Youth Empowerment, which are implemented through various programmes under the African Union Agenda 2063. Through those instruments, the African Union has emphasized the importance of the inclusion of young people at all levels to ensure their effective participation in every effort to promote peace and security.

Our leaders are working hand in hand to prioritize the well-being of our young people by providing them with access to and opportunities to receive adequate education that will afford them with the necessary knowledge and skills to enter an increasingly globalized and competitive labour market, minimize barriers created by unemployment and underemployment and empower them to become positive agents of change. The Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training to Foster Youth Employment perfectly exemplifies Africa's firm commitment to quality education for young people so that they can contribute to the fight against poverty in that vulnerable sector of society.

With regard to issues concerning the impact of conflict and instability among young people, the United Nations Population Fund has collaborated with several African countries, including the Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria, with a multisectoral approach to supporting the development of youth initiatives with a view to reducing the risk of radicalization and ensuring that young people can contribute to the development of their countries. Moreover, within the framework of the Africa-European Union partnership, special focus is placed on the issue of young people, in particular through the Africa-Europe Youth Summit. The fourth edition of the Summit, held from 9 to 11 October 2017, was endorsed by the Abidjan Declaration, in which young people from both continents called for the urgent implementation of resolution 2250 (2015) on the role

of young men and women in promoting peace and combating violent extremism.

Despite those various steps forward, there is still an urgent need to empower young people not only in the African region, but throughout the world so that they can be more influential and productive actors in their societies. We commend the efforts of the United Nations and its agencies to ensure the empowerment of young people, including the launch of its Youth 2030 initiative, which provides an ambitious framework for stepping up our efforts to include and empower young people. For the benefit of our young people, we encourage leaders to promote an integrated approach to all development settings, including ongoing investments in basic services, such as education, health care, water, the rule of law, justice, security, human rights, inclusive, accountable and responsive socioeconomic and political institutions, and conflict prevention mechanisms.

Governments, development partners and other influential people are called upon to adopt policies that promote the development and human rights of young people and assess the progress being made through the Sustainable Development Goals concerning adolescents and young people. Young people should be involved as full partners in achieving those Goals.

In conclusion, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and South Africa call for greater recognition of the place of young people in society. In that context, the three African members of the Security Council support common efforts to encourage greater participation of young people in decision-making processes, which will undoubtedly help to maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): A recent study showed that in 2016, there were 408 million young people who lived in settings affected by armed conflict or organized violence. Based on the statement just made on behalf of our African colleagues, the number could be as high as 600 million. We know about conflict-stricken places in Africa, such as Libya, and others like Syria, but the stories we heard are all about individual fates. We heard from the young woman from Afghanistan, who spoke such individual fates. I thank the presidency for putting this item on the Council's agenda.

At the same time, young people who grow up in conflict settings, are deprived of economic opportunities and education and suffer under poor governance and incompetent police and security services are more likely

to join extremist groups. A recent study conducted by the United Nations Development Programme, *Journey to Extremism in Africa*, shows that very clearly. It is therefore the responsibility of the international community and, in particular, of each individual State to ensure that young people are educated and provided with economic opportunities so that they can become, as our colleague from Equatorial Guinea said, positive agents of peace.

Let me quote one of the first sentences in the intervention by the Secretary-General's Envoy for Youth. She said, "young people care about peace". We heard wonderful statements by Ms. Sofia Ramyar and Ms. Wevyn Muganda in which they outlined their activities. I can only encourage them and congratulate Ms. Ramyar on the courage she shows in Afghanistan, in a society in which women still do not have the opportunities they deserve. We are very happy to hear that, during the most recent peace talks, at least 20 per cent of the participants around the table were women. Women and young people must have a chance to participate regularly in peace processes.

The good thing is that there are many examples of activities in which women participate. Our briefers are fantastic examples. We all know of Greta Thunberg, who was able to mobilize 1.6 million people in 125 countries to take a stand and ask world leaders to do more about climate action. Malala Yousafzai stood here at the United Nations and inspired us with her courage and determination. In April, we were briefed by Nadia Murad (see S/PV.8514), a young woman who gave a very emotional testimony of the suffering of Yazidi women in Iraq. She took a stand and fought for the rights of women and girls. We heard the testimony of wheelchair-bound Syrian refugee Nujeen Mustapha (see S/PV.8515), who talked about the fate of young Syrian refugees.

The voices of young people must be heard and amplified, and then turned into action. That is a top priority for Germany. Ms. Sofia Ramyar mentioned some of the activities Germany conducts in Afghanistan. In general, we have action plans for the development activities we regularly include in our policies. There are several examples. We support a youth cultural centre in Bamako so that young people are involved in other activities, instead of becoming extremists. In Lake Chad, we have a project that supports the survivors of sexual violence. We support Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children

and Armed Conflict, in her activities to reintegrate child soldiers. We support an educational centre for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

In Germany itself, we try to bring the United Nations into the classroom. We award a youth peace prize. We bring youth representatives to the United Nations. We not only support Afghan youth representatives; we also bring German youth representatives. I am very pleased to see two of them here in the Chamber. We have a so-called youth check, whereby we systematically consider the effects of legislation on young people and their future.

I very much thank the Peruvian presidency for putting this important issue on the Council's agenda. We should have regular meetings with youth briefers to update us on crisis settings. We need youth participation and engagement. We think that it is a crucial factor for sustaining peace and security.

Ms. Norman-Chalet (United States of America): I thank you, Mr President, for convening today's important meeting.

I also thank Ms. Wickramanayake, Ms. Muganda and Ms. Ramyar for their important updates, moving testimony and concrete recommendations. They have brought a very useful perspective into the Security Council and one, as others have said, that we do not usually hear, so it is welcome. We should be hearing directly from people like them more often — young people who are organizing in their communities, making their voices heard and helping make the world a safer and more inclusive place. The United States is pleased that they have a seat at the table today. It is something that we hope will happen even more often in the future.

There are many ways that we could talk about youth, peace and security. It is tragic that for so many of the conflicts on the Council's agenda, children and young adults are often caught in the crosshairs. They are the most vulnerable victims when schools shut down, hospitals are targeted and aid is blocked. When a generation of young people cannot get an education or start a family because of war, it will take decades to recover.

One key lesson we must take away from the discussions on youth and peace and security is that we must work even harder to stop conflicts before they begin. We need to listen directly to young people, as

we have today. More often than not, we want nothing more than for the fighting to stop so that they can have a chance at a more secure and prosperous future. I want to focus my remarks today on how we can harness the power of young people to make positive change.

As diplomats, we spend a great deal of time meeting and talking to each other behind closed doors. As my British colleague noted, those discussions rarely involve people without at least a grey hair or two. However, let us consider the reality. All around us, we see examples of young people setting and driving the political agenda. Young people are not waiting for change to happen; they are the change that is happening. In so many parts of the world, they are the ones demanding an end to the tyranny and speaking up for human rights and accountability.

Let us take just one example. Earlier this week, the Council had its second briefing on the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (see S/PV.8573). The advocacy of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Nadia Murad, who was in her early twenties when she first briefed the Council (see S/PV.7585), was instrumental in bringing attention to the plight of Yazidis and helped spur Council action. Ms. Murad's courage to come to the Council and give us a first-hand account of the brutality she encountered pushed the international community to act. We need to encourage that kind of leadership and give young people the tools that they need to succeed.

That is one reason the United States proudly invests in leadership exchanges and programmes aimed at partnering with youth around the world. Our young leader initiatives engage youth in Africa, South-East Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and across the Atlantic to provide business, civic and leadership development training. These efforts are aimed at building partnerships with promising leaders around the world. The United States also supports programmes that engage youth as partners to foster social cohesion and tolerance.

Young people have played a critical role in countering terrorist narratives at home and abroad. Terrorist groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) have tried to find vulnerable people to recruit, however young people around the world have countered these hateful narratives with innovative tools, apps and approaches. For example,

we have partnered with the Peer-To-Peer: Challenging Extremism programme, where students develop and implement online campaigns and content to prevent and counter violent extremism. Such engagement has been an important part of our whole-of-society effort, in line with the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism in countering ISIS over the past few years.

This year, we continue to raise awareness, build partnerships and generate new ideas on youth engagement and leadership. As part of the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum held this past April, the United States hosted an event for global youth delegates in order to hear directly from them about ways to further implement resolution 2250 (2015). A number of youth delegates highlighted the systematic underrepresentation of youth in politics and policymaking. They shared their feelings of being excluded from decisions that affect them and future generations.

We have made progress in establishing young people as partners for peace, but this is just the beginning and we all need to do more. We need to continue building upon resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), which establish youth and peace and security on the Council's agenda. For our part, the United States will continue to support pathways for young people to get the skills they need to become active citizens in shaping the Government and politics of their countries.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, we should continue setting an example by inviting briefers like these young people to brief us in the Council going forward. We encourage each Council member to consider the best ways that they can open doors for the next generation. We cannot afford to ignore or marginalize 4.5 billion people under the age of 30 around the world. We must all redouble these efforts to amplify the voices and contributions of young peacebuilders and youth leaders for a peaceful and prosperous future.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation to the young participants in this meeting — Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ms. Wevyn Muganda and Ms. Sofia Ramyar — for their briefings. I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, one year after the adoption of resolution 2419 (2018), which

reiterated the important and positive contribution of youth to efforts to promote and achieve international peace and security, and the important role of youth in preventing and resolving conflicts, as well as in peacebuilding efforts.

We strongly believe that the development of youth in any society is strongly linked to the level of advancement and welfare of the population. Therefore, we welcome this meeting to promote the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda in accordance with the two resolutions adopted by the Council on this topic, including resolution 2250 (2015) submitted by Jordan in 2015, which was the first of its kind.

I would like to address three aspects in our discussion today.

First, I will consider the challenges that impede the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda. The proliferation of conflicts around the world is a major obstacle to the positive contribution of youth to peace and security. In our region, in the Arab world, which unfortunately is home to some of the worst conflicts in the world, many young people face challenges that prevent them from achieving their aspirations. Conflicts have dashed their hopes and their future. Unemployment has increased their despair and insecurity. Poverty has deprived them of the right to live in dignity. Terrorism and radicalization have hijacked their innocence. These challenges are a serious threat to the future of countries and their sustainable development. We must address the root causes of conflicts.

Moreover, young people around the world are struggling in developing and conflict-affected nations to enjoy their basic needs, including education, employment and health care, and to practice their civil liberties and political participation. Unless those needs are met, young people will have no means to prosper or make their full contribution to society. These social, economic and political needs are necessary to improve the lives of youth and to eliminate poverty and hunger, as well as to promote the welfare of and more peaceful, inclusive societies.

Secondly, I would like to underscore some positive examples of the agenda's implementation. It is important to highlight the progress achieved in this regard in recent years. Many initiatives have been undertaken by Member States, the United Nations and civil society organizations — including, most importantly, young

people themselves — to promote implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda. These initiatives range from peace missions that involve young people in building social cohesion and stability in many conflict-affected regions worldwide, including in Colombia, Iraq, Kosovo and Somalia, to high-level political initiatives, such as the first International Symposium on Youth Participation in Peace Processes, in March 2019, which was co-hosted by Finland, Qatar and Colombia, in cooperation with the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, as noted by Ms. Wickramanayake in her briefing. We also welcome efforts undertaken by the United Nations, including the development of a joint plan of action on youth, peace and security to support the implementation of the United Nations Youth Strategy 2030.

Thirdly, I wish to highlight the measures needed to guarantee the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda. We fully agree that young people are the pivot of society's development. They are a critical element in achieving peace and security. In that regard, we welcome the recommendations contained in the policy paper on youth in peace operations commissioned by the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. We would also like to emphasize the need to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, a critical element with a very important link to peace and stability. The Goals can be achieved only through the development of youth and support for civil society organizations and institutions that are interested in their welfare. We also emphasize the need to invest in young people in order to build their capacities, in line with the principles and values that prevent them from falling victim to crime and extremism, by developing and promoting national, regional and global peace networks.

In conclusion, I reiterate Kuwait's readiness to work closely and constructively with the United Nations and the international community to support efforts aimed at promoting the youth, peace and security agenda, within and beyond the Council, and especially through our continued cooperation with the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

Mr. Syihab (Indonesia): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this very important meeting. Allow me, first of all, to thank all the briefers — Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, Ms. Wevyn Muganda and Ms. Sofia Ramyar — for their presentations, as well as for sharing their touching and inspiring experiences.

We concur that youth participation can increase the legitimacy and sustainability of peace processes. We therefore join the Secretary-General in saying that we must transform norms, practices, approaches and attitudes towards our young people and recognize them as equals who can contribute to all steps and aspects of peace processes.

Inclusiveness is indeed key. As future leaders, it is only logical that young people be given a bigger role in preventing conflict and encouraging peace and development. To that end, Governments should invest more in creating environments where young people are empowered to take control and ownership and exert a positive influence. Allow me to elaborate.

First, we need to create conditions conducive to youth participation, including in addressing the root causes of conflict. Socioeconomic gaps and a lack of economic opportunities can drive young people to disappointment and frustration. Disenchanted youth are fertile ground for the spread of dangerous narratives and ideas. In protracted conflicts, those disempowered young people are easy prey to armed groups, either as victims or as tools of war. The Council, in that regard, is well positioned to play an important role.

Peacekeeping efforts, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and community engagement, can help young people gain their second chance and reintegrate themselves into society. Post-reintegration and peacebuilding can create opportunities to help young people maintain their peaceful ways of life through education and job opportunities. Moreover, there is also a need to include youth in all stages of the peace continuum, as frequently mentioned by the Secretary-General, from conflict prevention, to conflict resolution, peacekeeping and, of course, peacebuilding.

To achieve that, partnership is needed, which brings me to my second point. Resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) were not meant for the small group of the Council alone, but for the wider membership of the United Nations. It is important that we translate those resolutions into action through partnerships involving States, regional organizations and the whole United Nations system. We appreciate the first International Symposium on Youth Participation in Peace Processes, held in March, and support the engagement of the President of the General Assembly in advancing the agenda of youth, peace and security.

Allow me to share Indonesia's experience in empowering youth to combat radicalization. In 2009, we enacted a youth law that serves as the legal foundation for integrating youth empowerment into our national development plan. It includes education access, basic health care and youth participation in decision-making processes and in promoting human rights. To help combat terrorism and violent extremism, we currently have approximately 780 youth ambassadors spread out across 13 provinces.

We brought that initiative to the region when, in April, we hosted a regional workshop on establishing youth ambassadors for peace against terrorism and violent extremism. One hundred young people from the region were tasked with building networks and spreading positive messages on social media. We look forward to the Secretary-General's report in May, which could feature our partnerships to combat radicalization among youth. Indonesia is a country that was built with the spirit of youth, and that spirit will continue to shape our future. The first Indonesian President, Mr. Sukarno, once said, "Give me 1,000 people and I will shake a mountain, but give me just 10 young people and I will shake the world". It is time that we transform our youth from a demographic dividend into one of peace.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ms. Wickramanayake, and the other briefers for their views.

We fully share the opinions that have been presented today about the need to pay due attention to the topic of youth in the United Nations system and to resolve acute problems related to their socialization, which is what Ms. Wickramanayake is successfully doing. We must all help her. However, the following question arises: Are we indeed helping Ms. Wickramanayake by discussing today's topic in the Security Council for a third time? In accordance with its mandate, the Security Council is supposed to deal with matters related to the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council's consideration of issues that are not related to that task can hardly improve the effectiveness of its activities or have any added value for resolving pressing issues for young people.

At the same time, we understand and recognize the importance of including youth-related issues in the discussions of country-specific topics on the Security Council agenda, in particular taking into account

the specific situations of African States, in which young people constitute a substantial proportion of the population. The famous German poet and thinker Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once said, "The fate of any nation at any time depends on the opinions of its young people under the age of 25". However, discussing such issues in isolation of their context can only distract the Council from resolving the urgent problems it is supposed to address. It seems particularly strange that a choice has been made to discuss such general matters against the backdrop of blocking subjects that are of immediate concern to the Security Council, as occurs periodically.

It is probable that, following this statement, some will try to suggest that youth issues are not a priority for Russia, but that is not the case. We are taking active measures at the national level to interact with young people. In 2014, the Government of the Russian Federation adopted the basis for the State youth policy to 2025, which is being implemented at the federal, regional and municipal levels. A key part of the strategy involves the State creating basic conditions for the full self-fulfilment and integration of young people into the social and political spheres and improving their socioeconomic situation.

We fully support the development of youth civil society, and we attach great importance to holding seminars and forums at the national and international levels, which helps to strengthen the peaceful and constructive potential of young people. In particular, in October 2017 we were pleased to host the nineteenth World Youth Festival in Sochi, which brought together over 20,000 people from more than 180 countries. We also advocate peaceful youth organizations and the development of intercultural and interreligious dialogue among the youth population. The important role that young people need to play in modern society, including through constructive participation in building and sustaining peace, is also reflected in resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018).

The independent study prepared by Mr. Graeme Simpson (see S/2018/86) gave us additional food for thought about the role of young people in efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts, and emphasized the importance of advancing their positive image. At the same time, practically speaking and aside from those conclusions, we believe that there is a need for States in conflict to pay due attention to fighting poverty,

illiteracy and unemployment, which are the fundamental barriers to young people realizing their potential.

As an example, let us look at the situation in Palestine, in particular the Gaza Strip, where the unemployment rate among young people is approaching 50 per cent. Against that backdrop, and given the stagnation of the Middle East peace process, a breeding ground is forming for the spread of extremist ideas and the radicalization of society. If we consider the subject of young people in the context of the Security Council agenda, while taking its mandate into account, work should focus on combating the challenges of extremism and terrorism.

All ages are undoubtedly exposed to those phenomena. However, young people, with their nascent world view and search for self-identification, are more vulnerable to radical ideology. That factor, alongside young people's lack of life experience, education and other prospects for self-fulfilment in countries with unfavourable socioeconomic environments or in conflict situations, is adeptly exploited by extremist groups to involve young people in unlawful activity.

As part of their attempts to attract young people, extremists increasingly use information and communication technologies, which requires us to bolster our collective efforts in the sphere of international information security. Regional organizations with the necessary country-specific expertise play an important role in countering the radicalization of young people. We note the fruitful work being done in this area by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Special attention should be paid to the phenomenon of using radicalized young people to achieve domestic political goals, in particular externally orchestrated processes that aim to overthrow legitimate authorities under the guise of democracy and human rights. It is important that the proclaimed support for young leaders not result in external players organizing anti-Government movements in States that they disfavour. Unfortunately, such situations are far too frequent.

In conclusion, let me once again highlight that we are by no means seeking to diminish the relevance of youth issues. We are convinced of the value of in-depth discussions on youth-related issues in the specialized forums of the United Nations system designed to

address issues of education, employment, sustainable development and other important subjects. The most comprehensive road map in the area of youth policy is the World Programme of Action for Youth, the separate aspects of which are considered within the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and their relevant subsidiary bodies.

We believe that the decision whether or not to raise a subject in the Security Council is not a reflection of its relevance to the international community. It is far more important, however, to strictly uphold the existing division of labour within the United Nations system, which benefits both the Security Council and young people. As was quite rightly pointed out by Mr. Heusgen, those who are more advanced in age will always find a way to discuss the problems of young people, and for that they do not need the Security Council.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Peru for convening and presiding over today's meeting. We also thank the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth for her briefing. China listened attentively to the briefings of youth representatives, Ms. Muganda and Ms. Ramyar.

Youth play an important role in promoting socioeconomic development and maintaining world peace and stability. At present, young people in a number of countries and regions are being affected by armed conflict and, as a result, face poverty, unemployment and other difficulties. At the same time, youth around the world are taking decisive action and making efforts to promote global peace and stability.

Resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), adopted by the Security Council in recent years, mandate the protection of young people from the harm of armed conflict and support the role of youth in peace and security. The international community should make tangible efforts to implement the relevant resolutions so as to strengthen the protection of young people in conflict zones and foster a favourable environment for the development of youth. In addition, young people in all countries should be encouraged to continue to play an active role and shoulder their due responsibilities in maintaining international peace and stability.

China would like to make the following points. First, we must step up political efforts to settle regional hotspot issues. In accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and its own mandate, the Council should work to prevent

and resolve conflicts through political means and assist conflict-affected countries in advancing their respective peace processes, in order to create an environment of peace and tranquillity in which young people can live. Pursuant to resolution 2419 (2018), relevant United Nations agencies and the Secretary-General's special envoys and special representatives, including his Envoy on Youth, must engage in closer exchanges on the needs of youth in armed conflict and in post-conflict situations.

Secondly, we must prioritize the role of youth in the prevention and resolution of conflict. It is important to fully consider youth-related factors in the political settlement of hotspot issues and ensure the constructive participation of young people in their own countries' peace processes, draw on their strengths, extensively listen to their views and prevent their marginalization. The United Nations and the wider international community should strengthen coordination with the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other regional and subregional organizations and provide greater support to youth-related projects.

Thirdly, we must resolutely counter terror and extremism, as they can harm young people. The international community should act upon the relevant Council resolutions and adopt a unified standard to resolutely combat all forms of terrorism and violent extremism. We must take steps to prevent terrorists and extremist ideologues from eroding the minds of young people, cut off terrorist and extremist channels of deception and incitement that target young people, and crack down on the online recruiting, planning and fundraising activities carried out by terrorists and extremists. It is equally important to encourage young people to become a positive peace-loving group.

Fourthly, we must foster an environment that enables youth to grow. Extreme poverty and imbalanced development, inter alia, are deep-rooted causes of conflict. The United Nations should assist developing countries in bolstering their sustainable-development capacity in an effort to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and capitalize on the dividends created by young people. The United Nations and the international community should support national Governments in developing youth policies in line with national conditions, provide training and employment opportunities for young people, enable them to build their own businesses and

constructively engage in politics, and nurture their sense of responsibility for social stability.

China supports the ongoing implementation of Council resolutions on youth, and we look forward to a comprehensive and balanced report from the Secretary-General, as called for by the aforementioned resolutions. In June, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Mongolian Ministry for Foreign Affairs co-hosted a North-East Asia regional workshop on youth, peace and security, which was a useful endeavour in promoting the implementation of the relevant Council resolutions. China sent delegates to the workshop to actively participate therein.

Youth are crucial to a nation's prosperity and strength, and they are the future and hope of humankind. We must therefore work together to foster a new type of international relations that features mutual respect, fairness, justice and mutually beneficial cooperation. We must continue to promote the comprehensive development of youth and support the younger generation in making important contributions to world peace and development.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Peru for convening this meeting. We also thank the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the representatives of civil society for sharing their perspectives and experiences and illustrating for us the progress made and challenges encountered in implementing resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018).

Both of those resolutions as well as the progress study entitled "The missing peace: independent progress study on youth and peace and security" (S/2018/86) serve as a reference point for giving a greater voice to young people in decision-making and implementing mechanisms that allow them to meaningfully participate in peace processes. The International Symposium on Youth Participation in Peace Processes, held in Helsinki, served as an excellent platform to learn from young peacebuilders about areas for improvement in implementing resolutions on youth, peace and security.

Young people living in conflict zones are exposed to numerous risks and forms of violence. Safeguarding their lives and their human rights must therefore be a priority, including those of young peacebuilders, human rights defenders and youth organizations, which tend to face reprisals for their work.

With their immeasurable transformative and innovative potential, young people are allies. They play a vital role in deterring and resolving conflict. They also act as peacemakers in their communities and transform societies by making them more just, inclusive and peaceful. Guaranteeing the meaningful participation of young people in building and maintaining peace and security is essential on the path to achieving sustainable peace.

It is therefore vital to recognize their role in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as an effective tool for preventing and mitigating conflict, primarily through implementing Goal 16 — a task on which our Government is working with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The United Nations Youth Strategy is undoubtedly an important element of the Secretary-General's reform. In this regard, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and her Office deserve our highest praise, as does the UNDP, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the United Nations Population Fund, which are promoting the issue within their respective mandates.

We hope that the Security Council ensures that young people participate in this Chamber alongside us, briefing us on the maintenance of peace and security and sharing their perspectives and visions, whether in open debates or briefings. That has been a practice of the Dominican Republic.

We wish to seize this opportunity to highlight other examples of good practices that we believe are relevant. The United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia has launched a strategy for implementing resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), with a focus on the role of young people in efforts aimed at reintegration and guaranteeing national security. The Colombian Government has committed to developing a national action plan for the implementation of the agenda. Moreover, the African Union has appointed a Special Envoy on Youth and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo has developed an in-mission framework strategy on youth, peace and security.

Those concrete examples of the leading role that young people play in promoting peace should inspire our efforts. However, we must continue to take measures to implement the youth, peace and security agenda. In that regard, we need to create networks of

young mediators at the regional level to strengthen their role in mediation and conflict prevention; expand the profiles and lists of reserve personnel, as well as prioritize capacity-building and establish an exclusive budget line to ensure that the United Nations system is equipped to ensure the implementation of resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), while supporting Member States in that regard; ensure the preparation of an annual report of the Secretary-General on the progress made on and existing challenges regarding those resolutions, within the framework of an annual open debate; and create an informal group of experts on youth, peace and security, in order to systematically and continuously monitor their implementation.

We hope that the Secretary-General's reports to the Security Council, especially those relating to specific countries, as well as the renewal of mandates of peacekeeping operations and political missions, will include references to the implementation of resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018). We also join those who eagerly await the Secretary-General's first report on youth, peace and security, as it will most certainly shed further light on the challenges and gaps that persist in the implementation of the agenda and provide guidance on how to address the issue going forward.

In conclusion, let us always remember as States to work to put youth at the centre of their efforts, being inclusive and helping them to prevent conflicts and eliminate obstacles, in order to redress the historical marginalization and exclusion that they have experienced in decision-making processes aimed at achieving peace.

Mr. De Riviere (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Peruvian presidency for taking the initiative to convene this meeting one year after the adoption of resolution 2419 (2018), which Peru initiated with Sweden. I thank the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, as well as Ms. Muganda and Ms. Ramyar, for their briefings.

I wish to highlight the obstacles to youth participation before exploring some ways that the Security Council could support them in their work for peace and security.

Young people and youth organizations have not waited for us to become actors in international peace and security. All over the world, they contribute to innovative solutions, invest in new alternative spaces and fight the status quo, as highlighted in the report of

the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the leading role of young people in preventing and combating violent extremism. However, this immense potential cannot be realized if young people are displaced or forced to leave their countries because of war, if they are indoctrinated by extremist groups, if their schools and universities are attacked, if all forms of freedom of expression are hindered or if they are excluded from political, economic and social life. We must allow young people to empower themselves in all of these areas.

France has therefore made the empowerment of young people a national priority and a main focus of its diplomacy. As an example, the MediaSahel project, led by the French Development Agency, has mobilized a budget of €8.3 million to enable young people from Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger to counter fake news, access reliable information and more actively and calmly participate in public debate in their countries.

We are also supporting youth participation as part of our presidency of the Group of Seven (G-7). One month ago, hundreds of decision-makers under the age of 30 gathered in Paris, under the high patronage of the President of the Republic, to present recommendations on fighting inequality. These recommendations will be forwarded to the G-7 Heads of State, who will meet from 24 to 26 August in Biarritz. Youth participation will also be a priority of the forum that France is co-organizing with Mexico and UN-Women in 2020 to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995.

The Council must more consistently support youth action in building peace and security by strengthening the operational framework of resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), which it adopted. Discussions on the youth, peace and security agenda, such as today's, are important. The subject of youth must also be more consistently included in our deliberations of the country-specific situations on our agenda. In this regard, we commend the participation in Security Council meetings of young briefers, such as Kessy Ekomo-Soignet, of the Central African Republic (see S/PV.8241), Inas Miloud, of Libya (see S/PV.8514) and Nujeen Mustafa, a young Syrian refugee (see S/PV.8556). These briefings should become more frequent.

It is also essential that country-specific reports incorporate the aspirations of youth and the contribution of the United Nations to their being

included in the peace process. In this regard, I wish to commend the youth strategy of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, as well as the efforts of the UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission, on developing a comprehensive programme on youth, peace and security and supporting youth coalitions and the youth, peace and security road maps that will begin in 2020.

We look forward to the recommendations the Secretary-General will make in his report on the implementation of resolutions 2419 (2018) and 2250 (2015) between now and May 2020. In this regard, I wish to commend the Secretary-General's extraordinary advocacy for youth, as demonstrated by the recent launch of "Youth 2030: The United Nations Strategy on Youth", the organization of the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and Youth Forum Lisbon+21 and the Youth Climate Summit, scheduled for September, which illustrate the efforts of the Secretary-General to make youth a pillar of multilateralism.

In 1957, Albert Camus said in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in Literature,

"Every generation undoubtedly feels that it is destined to remake the world. Mine knows, however, that it will not do so. But perhaps its task is even greater: to prevent the world from falling apart."

We will not be able to prevent the world from falling apart without the full and effective participation of current and future generations and without recognizing them as indispensable partners in international peace and security. To achieve that end, the Council can count on the full commitment of France.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): First of all, let me thank our three young and excellent briefers. I must say that we are very pleased to have them here in the Chamber today. It is really important for us to hear from them as women, young leaders and civil society representatives about their views and expectations with respect to the Security Council and about the way forward.

I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, and your country, Peru, as well as former Security Council member, Sweden, for their commitment to the youth, peace and security agenda. Peru and Sweden were instrumental in the adoption of the previous resolution on this topic, resolution 2419 (2018).

My delegation cannot agree with the view that the youth, peace and security agenda should not be a topic

for discussion in the Security Council Chamber. There is nothing in the Charter of the United Nations that prohibits us from discussing this important topic. Quite on the contrary, given that young people constitute almost one third of our world's entire population, it is our obligation to discuss it. That is why we also discuss various other thematic topics, such as the protection of civilians, sexual violence in conflict and climate change; it is precisely for that very same reason that we are meeting again to discuss the role of youth in conflict prevention and building sustainable peace. Judging by today's debate, this view is shared by a majority of Council members.

As has already been highlighted by a number of other delegations, inclusiveness in peace processes is crucial to ensuring sustainable peace. That is why any peace process — any peacebuilding or peacekeeping process — will not be fully implemented and sustained without the full inclusion of young people from the outset. In this context, the adoption of resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) were ground-breaking achievements, demonstrating that younger generations are ready to take centre stage in peace and security initiatives and become agents of change. I am also very encouraged by today's briefers because they have demonstrated that young people are not only waiting for us, older people, to do something — they are changing the world by themselves. They are agents of change.

Having established the legal framework through those two resolutions, the next key stage is their proper implementation. Regional organizations and regional cooperation should play a key role in that regard. I therefore concur with the statement delivered by the representative of Equatorial Guinea on behalf of the African members of the Council, which demonstrated the African approach to this agenda item. The Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth has already highlighted a number of different regional initiatives and conferences. To echo my friends in the Chinese delegation, I should also like to commend the Government of Mongolia for having organized, in cooperation with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the youth, peace and security workshop on perspectives for dialogue in North-East Asia, which took place in June.

Let me highlight some issues that are of particular importance to Poland in the context of this topic. The first is the situation of young people with disabilities. As you know, Mr. President, just a few weeks ago, the Security Council adopted by consensus its first-ever

resolution on people with disabilities in armed conflict (resolution 2475 (2019)), which is especially important to us because people with disabilities are particularly affected by conflicts — they are very often ostracized or marginalized within their immediate families and communities and find themselves at a particular risk of violence and abuse.

The second issue of importance to us is the situation of young girls. For girls, the situation is even more alarming. Every day, millions of young women are exposed to gender-based violence, child, early and forced marriage, sex trafficking, sexual harassment, rape and abuse. They are in critical need of humanitarian assistance and access to medical services. Young women should be free to live without prejudice or limited, unequal opportunity. They should be able to live as true and complete versions of themselves. Furthermore, we need to remember that men too are the victims of the patriarchal mindset and oppressive masculinity. The Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth referred to these negative stereotypes, which in fact affect both men and women. That is why we stand before the great challenge of changing the stereotypes, norms and roles assigned to each sex. We want to live in a world where equality between women and men is a reality, not an aspiration.

Today's boys and girls, teenagers and young adults are our future leaders, and they no longer want to remain silent. The best example of that is the young briefers who are in this Chamber with us today, and I hope that one day soon they will replace us around this table. They have enormous power, dedication and a strong voice. Young people are increasingly aware of their rights and opportunities. They are able to exchange views and engage in meaningful discussions through the Internet and social media. With a growing gap between aspirations, training and decent job opportunities, the transition we are living has become more uncertain than ever.

The frustration of young people and their lack of trust in authorities, Governments and leaders are growing. Young people do not want empty promises and assurances — they want to see concrete action. It is our responsibility to bridge the gap between policies, plans and practical impacts across the globe. It is important to draw attention to the unique contributions of many young peacebuilders, activists and volunteers in conflict prevention and justice systems as they work to build and sustain peace. Youth and student

organizations are becoming increasingly active in delivering aid and humanitarian assistance to people in the most dangerous places. We already have the guiding principles — investment, inclusiveness and partnership. It is crucial that we undertake a partnership dialogue with young people in order to work together to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

I would like to echo Ambassador Heusgen of Germany by paying special tribute to 16-year-old Swedish activist Greta Thunberg for the way in which she has inspired us, the world and even a 13-year-old girl in Poland, thereby demonstrating the power of young people. In her speeches — including at the landmark twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, organized by Poland in Katowice last year, which operationalized the Paris Agreement on Climate Change by adopting the Katowice rulebook — Greta Thunberg continues to call for a change in our behaviour vis-à-vis climate change.

Another important point — and I should like to refer to the statements made by the representative of Equatorial Guinea on behalf of the African members of the Council and by Ms. Wevyn Muganda — is that, in thinking about conflict prevention and effective conflict resolution, we must address the problem in a comprehensive way, in line with the three pillars of the United Nations, which includes not only development and peace and security, but also human rights — and it was that human rights element that was mentioned in Equatorial Guinea's statement. One of the key elements of the human rights pillar is justice. I fully concur with Ms. Wevyn Muganda in that there can be no peace without justice. That is exactly what Poland continues to repeat in this Chamber at each and every opportunity.

In conclusion, let me again express our appreciation to Peru for having put this important matter high on the agenda of the Security Council. We hope to see it further strengthened. We are looking forward to Secretary-General's youth, peace and security report in 2020 and hope that that will become a recurrent report. Finally, we would like to see young people in this Chamber, not only at thematic debates on youth, peace and security, but also at country-specific debates, as was the case with the very brave young disabled person from Syria, Nujeen Mustafa (see S/PV.8515).

Mrs. Van Vlierberge (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to thank the Secretary-

General's Envoy on Youth, as well as Ms. Muganda and Ms. Ramyar, for their informative briefings.

Belgium welcomes the importance attached to the youth, peace and security agenda in the Council. Resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) underscore the immense potential of young people in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Let us work towards maximizing that potential.

Estimates project that up to 600 million young adults are living in fragile and conflict-affected States. Those young people constitute not only the majority of the population in those countries but also the majority of their armed forces and security personnel. Young women are often solely responsible for the economic survival of their families. Yet, those young people are all too often excluded from peace processes or decision-making concerning the future of their countries. Their political, social or economic exclusion is a risk factor. Those varied forms of exclusion can fuel a collective mistrust of the national and international political institutions that are supposed to serve and protect them. It is therefore crucial to create an environment conducive to the participation and inclusion of young adults in conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes. Allow me to underscore four points in that regard.

First, youth participation in formal and informal peace and mediation processes can enhance their legitimacy and sustainability. However, in order to move from exclusion to genuine inclusion, we must recognize young people as equal and powerful actors who can make a positive contribution throughout the peace process. That requires a change of norms, practices and attitudes. That is not impossible; we have recently seen significant youth participation in the peace process in Colombia and witnessed the establishment of a high advisory board for peace in Afghanistan, which includes a youth committee.

Secondly, young people often constitute the majority members of armed and military groups. Their viewpoints and needs should be central to processes of security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as in community violence-reduction programmes and actions to prevent violent extremism.

Thirdly, effective inclusion can be achieved only by giving young men and women the dignity, protection and quality of life to which they are entitled. In that

respect, Belgium remains firmly committed to the promotion of human rights, which is a fundamental condition for peace and development, attaching particular importance to the rights of vulnerable groups.

Finally, we recognize the important role that new information technologies can play. Two-thirds of Internet users around the world are under 35 years old. Free of territorial constraints, young people can now learn from more varied reference models, as demonstrated by the independent progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86). While new information technologies and social media may pose challenges, those same technologies can go beyond the lines of conflict and facilitate the civic participation of young people. For example, civil society used social media to engage young people in the High-level Revitalization Forum on the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

Belgium will continue to advocate for the greater integration of the youth, peace and security agenda in the debates of the Council. It is important that the Council be informed in a timely and comprehensive manner of the specific situations under this agenda item.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Peru.

At the outset, I wish to thank this afternoon's three briefers, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, Ms. Wevyn Muganda and Ms. Sofia Ramyar — young and influential leaders committed to peace in their countries and throughout the world. We also wish to express our gratitude for the support and contributions of civil society organizations in preparing this briefing, and that of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Development Programme. We also wish to express our appreciation and support for the work of the Secretary-General's Envoy for Youth and highlight the commitment of the Secretary-General to the empowerment of young people.

Peru is firmly committed to promoting and recognizing the role that young people are called to fulfil in preventing and resolving conflicts, ensuring justice and building sustainable peace. As part of that commitment and during our presidency of the Council, we organized an open debate on this topic in April 2018 (S/PV.8241) and, as has been recalled by other delegations, we submitted, together with Sweden,

resolution 2419 (2018), which was adopted unanimously. That resolution reminds us that we should stop viewing young people as a problem and begin to recognize them as central actors in peace processes, which is an appropriate approach to exploiting and maximizing their potential, commitment and resilience both in the prevention and in the resolution of conflicts.

Nevertheless, resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), which were adopted by the Council on this topic, start from the premise that Governments and the multilateral system still face obstacles in fully including young people in processes aimed at building sustainable peace, despite the fact that those same young people represent the majority of the affected population in armed conflicts around the world.

For the effective implementation of both resolutions, we believe it fundamental to promote State dialogue with youth-led organizations and to take their opinions into account in drawing up policies and programmes. The aforementioned resolutions can be implemented only through the full and meaningful participation of young people, while paying special attention to the inclusion of young women in decision-making, mainly through their political participation in peace negotiations and in the management of more inclusive and representative Government structures. We welcome the efforts carried out by some peace missions in implementing those resolutions, as is the case in Colombia, Kosovo and Iraq, particularly through the establishment of mechanisms that allow young people to participate in and contribute to peacekeeping processes in their respective national communities.

The youth, peace and security agenda is also closely linked to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals commit us, inter alia, to creating decent employment for young people, guaranteeing equal opportunities, promoting peaceful societies, promoting human rights, safeguarding diversity and combating discrimination. Financing the implementation of the agenda is also a pending issue. States, international organizations and donors should promote accessible, flexible and innovative funding opportunities for organizations that are led by and for young people that seek to support peace processes through activities to consolidate peace and prevent violence.

To conclude, we believe that the Council should continue to promote this important topic and grant it

regular follow-up, particularly in the area of conflict resolution and building sustainable peace. We therefore eagerly await the report that the Secretary-General will submit by May 2020, in accordance with the request made in resolution 2419 (2018).

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.