

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
2 October 2019

Original: English

**Letter dated 2 October 2019 from the Permanent Representative
of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General**

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of South Africa, the Security Council will hold a debate on “Peace and security in Africa: the centrality of preventative diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution” on Monday, 7 October 2019. In order to guide the discussion on the subject, South Africa has prepared a concept note (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jerry **Matjila**
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of South Africa



Annex to the letter dated 2 October 2019 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council debate on the theme “Peace and security in Africa: the centrality of preventative diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution”, to be held on 7 October 2019

Introduction

1. Conflicts in Africa continue to form the bulk of items on the agenda of the Security Council. This is underscored by the fact that the vast majority of United Nations peacekeeping missions are on the African continent. The States members of the African Union have consistently appealed for the voice of Africa to be taken into account on issues of peace and security on the continent. This position is firmly rooted in the understanding that the Security Council is the principal organ/multilateral body charged with maintaining international peace and security, including on the African continent. Without regional cooperation, however, it is hard or almost impossible for United Nations efforts to succeed on their own.

2. Thus, the critical role and importance of regional arrangements, such as the African Union, regional economic communities and other mechanisms, are explicitly accepted and recognized under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. More importantly, Article 52 clearly outlines and codifies the importance of regional bodies in the achievement of the pacific settlement of disputes through such arrangements. It is in this respect that the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the African Union Peace and Security Architecture have built-in, and highlight, the primacy of preventative diplomacy as a first step towards conflict prevention and resolution on the continent.

3. However, although preventative diplomacy is and has been utilized by the United Nations system at large and by the office of the Secretary-General in particular through its good offices role, preventative diplomacy has not always been regarded as a central pillar of the work of the Security Council. More often than not, the Council’s approach and contribution are visible mainly in large-scale violent conflict or immediate crises. The Council has a key responsibility to prevent conflicts before they turn into violent conflicts and to maintain global and regional peace and security. The question is, how can the work of the Council be enhanced to infuse large-scale preventative diplomacy in its work towards preventing violent conflicts in Africa? How can the Council work jointly, effectively and efficiently in collaboration and partnership with regional mechanisms, such as regional economic communities, to fully utilize preventative diplomacy?

Objectives

- South Africa proposes a debate in the Security Council during its presidency in October 2019, to reflect on the centrality and value of preventative diplomacy in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. The issue will be covered under the item entitled “Peace and security in Africa” and will contribute to the enhancement of the African Union-United Nations partnership. The debate will also form part of the building blocks towards the annual joint consultation between the Security Council of the United Nations and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.
- The debate is framed within Chapter VI, Article 33, of the Charter, in which it is stated that parties to a dispute shall seek a solution through political means,

including negotiation and mediation. This is also the backbone of South African foreign policy, which promotes the pacific settlement of disputes. The use of good offices as a means to settle disputes can assist parties to a conflict in addressing the root causes of the conflict and in embarking on negotiations.

- The debate will serve to promote cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention and mediation.
 - The debate will also contribute to ensuring the implementation of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, of Agenda 2063 with regard to silencing the guns in Africa by 2020, and of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to enhance collaboration, cooperation and coordination in the search for sustainable solutions to challenges to international peace and security, as well as to respond in a timely, coherent and decisive manner to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts.
-