Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

Provisional

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New York

President:	Ms. Botchwey/Mr. Akufo-Addo	(Ghana)
Members:	Albania	Mr. Hoxha
	Brazil.	Mr. Costa Filho
	China.	Mr. Zhang Jun
	France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	Gabon	Mr. Immongault
	India	Mrs. Kamboj
	Ireland	Mr. Mythen
	Kenya.	Mr. Kiboino
	Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation.	Mr. Nebenzia
	United Arab Emirates	Mr. Al Nahyan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America.	Ms. Sherwood-Randall

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

Counter-terrorism in Africa: an imperative for peace, security and development

Letter dated 1 November 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2022/822)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda.

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

Counter-terrorism in Africa: an imperative for peace, security and development

Letter dated 1 November 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2022/822)

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in the meeting: His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; Ms. Benedikta von Seherr-Thoss, Managing Director for Common Security and Defence Policy and Crisis Response of the European External Action Service; and Ms. Comfort Ero, President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Crisis Group.

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/2022/822, which contains the text of a letter dated 1 November 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I warmly welcome Her Excellency Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, to whom I now give the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: Let me begin by conveying greetings from Secretary-General António Guterres, on whose behalf I deliver these remarks today. I would like to thank the Ghanian presidency for convening this debate on such an urgent issue.

Terrorism is a major threat to international peace and security. Nowhere has that threat been felt more keenly than in Africa. Terrorists and violent extremists — including Da'esh, Al-Qaida and their affiliates — have exploited instability and conflict to increase their activities and intensify attacks across the continent. Their senseless, terror-fuelled violence has killed and wounded thousands. Many more continue to suffer from the broader impact of terrorism on their lives and livelihoods.

Women and girls in particular bear the brunt of insecurity and inequality. Some terrorist groups have a misogynistic worldview that denies women and girls their fundamental rights.

The situation in the Sahel and West Africa is particularly urgent, with some of the most violent affiliates of Da'esh operating in the region. In the past two years, those groups have expanded across large areas of the Sahel, increasing their presence in Mali while penetrating further into Burkina Faso and the Niger. They have also expanded southward into countries of the Gulf of Guinea, which have so far largely avoided terrorist attacks or have recently emerged from armed conflict.

Terrorist and violent extremist groups aggravate instability and human suffering. They can plunge a country emerging from war back into the depths of conflict. Climate disruptions make matters worse, inducing intercommunal tensions and food insecurity, which are exploited by terrorists and other criminal groups. And digital tools make spreading hate and disinformation easier than ever.

In many instances, it can be difficult to differentiate between terrorists, non-State armed groups and criminal networks. Those groups often pursue different agendas and strategies, fuelled by smuggling, human trafficking and other methods of illicit financing. Some have morphed into insurgencies, occupying territories and posing as alternatives to State authority.

In today's hyper-connected world, the spread of terrorism in Africa is not a concern for African Member States alone. The challenge belongs to us all. Countering international terrorism requires effective multilateral responses. Such responses need to address terrorism together with concurrent and converging threats, including the worsening climate emergency, armed conflict, poverty and inequality, lawless cyberspace and the uneven recovery from the coronavirus disease pandemic.

The New Agenda for Peace, envisaged as part of the Secretary-General's report on *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), will embrace that holistic, comprehensive approach. In a context of increasing polarization, with divisions heightened by the war in Ukraine, the New Agenda for Peace will propose ways to address new and emerging risks and revitalize our collective peace

and security system. Allow me to suggest a few ideas for the Council's consideration on advancing counter-terrorism efforts in Africa.

First, prevention remains our best response to terrorism, violent extremism and other threats to peace and security. We must address the instability and conflict that can lead to terrorism in the first place, as well as the conditions exploited by terrorists in pursuit of their agendas. If terrorist and extremist views too often find a welcoming home with deeply dissatisfied, marginalized and desperate people, it is up to us to help formulate responses that address those conditions. Fostering conflict-sensitive approaches and integrating relevant policies across United Nations entities is essential. Time and again, purely military and law-enforcement responses have not only proved their limits, but they have also been counterproductive. We must strike a better balance and ensure coherence and complementarity between preventive and militarized responses. There can be no sustainable development without peace, and there will certainly be no peace without sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU) are therefore crucial preventive tools.

Secondly, everyone needs to be included. Addressing the many drivers of terrorism requires whole-of-society approaches that are community-based and gender-sensitive. Counter-terrorism strategies have a better chance of addressing the needs and concerns of society as a whole when they capture and reflect a wide array of voices, including those of civil society, minorities, young people and the private sector. There are complex links between terrorism, patriarchy and gender-based violence. Counter-terrorism policies are therefore often strengthened by the meaningful participation and leadership of women and girls. Engaging all sectors of society requires sustained political commitment across Government departments, and partnerships with civil society, local communities, the private sector and much more.

Thirdly, countering terrorism can never be an excuse for violating human rights or international law. Abuse committed under the guise of countering terrorism and violent extremism can only set us back. Successful counter-terrorism policies, like all policies, must uphold the rule of law and respect international law, including human rights law. The Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights places human rights at the centre of our work at the United Nations, from humanitarian action to peace and security to sustainable development. That is why, in the face of the deteriorating security and humanitarian situations in the Sahel region, the Secretary-General has called for renewed efforts to promote State institutions and constitutional order. I would like to reiterate his call as we welcome President Nana Akufo-Addo. We look forward to the recommendations of the Independent High-level Panel on Security and Development in the Sahel for strengthening international coordination in order to effectively address the multidimensional crisis in the region.

Fourthly, regional organizations have a critical role to play. The challenges posed by terrorist and violent extremist groups can be met only through approaches that are adapted to local contexts. There are numerous regional initiatives countering terrorism in Africa, from the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad basin to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, the Accra Initiative and the Nouakchott Process. Those regional arrangements require full support and a durable commitment from the international community. I welcome the United Nations-AU technical working group on preventing violent extremism and countering terrorism, which aims to increase coordination and synergies between our two organizations. I also reiterate our appeal to the Security Council to ensure predictable funding for African Union operations that the Council has authorized, including for countering terrorism. As requested by the Council, we are preparing a joint progress report on the financing of AU peace operations, which is due in April 2023. We must put in place an innovative architecture that supports African peace operations in an effective and sustainable manner.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the Economic Community of West African States, the current and past Chairs, for their efforts to tackle farmer-herders' conflicts through protocols on transhumance and the free movement of people and goods. The only lasting solution to the underlying drivers of conflict is through sustainable development that leaves no one behind.

That leads to my fifth and final point, which is that preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism requires resources. The magnitude of the problem calls for bold investment. Addressing those interlinked obstacles — from economic deprivation to

organized crime and governance challenges — requires sustained and predictable funding at scale.

In conclusion, I welcome the summit scheduled for October 2023 on counter-terrorism in Africa, organized jointly by the Office of Counter-Terrorism and Nigeria. It will be an opportunity to consider ways to strengthen United Nations support to counter-terrorism efforts across the continent. I am confident that today's debate will offer useful insights for the summit, bringing us closer to the solutions we need to address the threat of terrorism in Africa and help to build peaceful, stable communities and societies across the continent.

The President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Faki Mahamat.

Mr. Faki Mahamat (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for inviting us to this important meeting devoted to the issues of peace, security and counter-terrorism in Africa. I hope that new ideas and initiatives will emerge from the meeting, and I wish the Ghanaian presidency of the Council every success for the current month. I would like to focus on two areas, the first relating to our ongoing quest for peace and the second on countering terrorism and violent extremism in particular.

From Mali to Mozambique, from Somalia to the Gulf of Guinea, from Libya to the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and including the Lake Chad basin, problems of peace and security are tormenting, agitating and mobilizing African minds and African attention. Even Europe, thought to be definitively immunized to such issues through its tragic previous experiences and continuing prosperity, has been once again embroiled in a devastating war, this one between Russia and Ukraine, the consequences of which could plunge humankind into a new tragedy for our planet. In Africa, terrorism and the increasingly frequent use of violence as a means of gaining and maintaining power are fragmenting societies and causing dozens of deaths and significant physical and psychological damage every day, with incalculable consequences for the vital sectors of health, education and food for entire populations.

The Security Council, a major and central organ in this area, is being called on to examine, as it does every day, but with greater conviction and firmness, the unspeakable violence that is ravaging our planet and the heartbreaking misery that it creates. The failure of our systems and the vanity of our values are behind the birth and the spread of terrorism, that monster of our times. And that scourge has spread to Africa. Somalia, Libya, Mali, Burkina Faso, the Lake Chad basin, Mozambique and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo are all theatres and preferred areas for the proliferation of deadly terrorist activities today.

What has the international community, whose linchpin the Security Council, done on issues of peace and security and on the fight against terrorism in particular? What specific answers have we given to the African countries that are victims of this aggression?

Africa, let us say it, is tired of hearing promises and getting only disappointment. In the face of terrorism, whose devastation of the continent is well known, Africa deserves to benefit from the same prompt solicitude that its partners show in other places and under other circumstances.

However, Africa has not been lacking in initiatives to counter the phenomenon, in particular through the Accra Initiative, which is intended as an ideal framework for the fight and whose objective is to promote information exchange and conduct joint cross-border military operations between its member States — Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo. There is also the formation of the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force, the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad region, the Southern Africa Development Community Force in Mozambique, the Nouakchott Process, and more recently the establishment of a regional force in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition, the African Union has set up a peace fund to work on prevention and support the efforts of countries that are victims of terrorist violence.

It is clear that Africa is capable of mobilizing its resources, its men and women, in this existential struggle against terrorism. However, it has a pressing need for solidarity and, above all, for sustainable financial resources and technical and logistical support to sustain its efforts to fight the scourge. We call upon the Security Council, which is responsible for maintaining international peace and security, in this regard.

In recent times, such dangerous responses as non-constitutional changes, which not only represent a real setback for democracy, but are also a deceptive illusion of salvation for the African nations that are the

victims of them, have become widespread. The result is practices and models of governance that are highly detrimental to the health of States already weakened by many other negative exogenous and endogenous factors.

I would like at this point to commend President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's commitment to democracy, which has been vividly demonstrated by his opposition to anti-constitutional Government changes, particularly when he was the current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States.

Solidarity with Africa in its heroic struggle against terrorism, unconstitutional changes and food, education and health insecurity is an imperative duty of the international community. Terrorism has no homeland. Its defeat in Africa is necessary to cut its chances of metastasizing elsewhere. This solidarity would be futile if it were not based on a new conception of peacemaking and peacekeeping that defines a new, more dynamic, less bureaucratized and above all more aggressive model. At doctrinal and operational levels, the concept in this regard reflects a foundation of shared values articulated around the principle that African problems must be solved by Africans, with the support of the international community.

As I have said many times before, traditional mechanisms for responding to threats to peace, peacebuilding and peacekeeping are no longer entirely consistent with the new circumstances or the new threats. Terrorism in all its forms and illegal trafficking of all kinds are able to elude the old models. The costs, the bureaucratic red tape, the modes of operation and operational and tactical redeployment of these models make them — let us be frank — unsuitable, ineffective and obsolete. The mandates of United Nations missions need urgently to be revised to make them real actors in the fight against terrorist groups and other harmful armed groups.

As far as the African Union is concerned, we are ready to work with the United Nations, the United Nations Secretariat and the Security Council to bring about an innovative approach at the doctrinal and operational levels. Our excellent relationship with the Secretary-General and the equally fruitful relationship between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Security Council give reason to be optimistic about the future of our partnership for peace and the effective fight against terrorism. We urge collective action against this scourge and its direct and indirect causes. Our expectations for an urgent and determined

response are high, and I must admit that we are very impatient.

The President: I thank Mr. Faki Mahamat for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Von Seherr-Thoss.

Ms. Von Seherr-Thoss: Let me first express our appreciation to Ghana for convening today's debate and for the opportunity to participate in this important discussion. This is a topic of great importance to the European Union (EU).

The EU is a strong believer in the link between security and development. We believe that holistic approaches to security and peacebuilding ensure their sustainability. The EU applies this reasoning in our development programmes, counter-terrorism strategies and common security and defence policy, in Africa and in many other countries beyond.

Multilateralism is key to the promotion of peace and security, and the United Nations is at its core. We therefore greatly value the strategic partnership we have with the United Nations on peace operations and crisis management. The EU-United Nations Global Terrorist Threats Facility is a good example of this. Our partnership has created important synergies between the United Nations and EU missions on the ground. We will continue to work together, including on supporting regional counter-terrorism efforts.

Other multilateral efforts also have important roles to play in supporting and complementing the United Nations. The Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) is one key platform. Last September, the EU assumed the role of co-Chair of the GCTF, and we made the threat of terrorism in Africa a key priority for our two-year tenure.

What does this multilateral engagement mean on the ground? The EU counter-terrorism efforts build on our strong presence in Africa. Several EU missions currently provide military and civilian support to African countries, the latest example being the EU Training Mission in Mozambique. This mission deployed last year to train and support the Mozambican armed forces, with a view to protecting civilians and restoring security in Cabo Delgado. Five of our civilian missions include a counter-terrorism mandate: the capacity-building missions in the Niger, Mali and Somalia, the border assistance mission in Libya, and

the security-sector-reform assistance mission in the Central African Republic.

Moreover, the EU continues to support African-led peace operations. Earlier this year, the EU approved €600 million in assistance to the African Union through the European Peace Facility, our financial instrument aimed at preventing conflicts, building peace and strengthening our partners.

Yet despite our collective efforts to keep the threat of extremist groups at bay, we have all come to realize that these efforts have not been enough. We find ourselves on the back foot in too many places, and we will need to do more if we are to be successful over the long haul. We will also need to cooperate better. The EU plays a role in this by bringing its 27 member States together. Many EU member States have long and multifaceted relationships with the African continent, and the EU has a strong commitment to working with African nations, the African Union and with the United Nations, to address the growing threat of terrorism and bolster resilience in the face of violent extremist ideologies.

Resilience in the face of violent extremism and terrorism is a security matter, but it is equally a political matter. We cannot root out violent extremism by force alone. So let us talk about prevention as well. The EU's efforts in preventing and countering violent extremism have shown real results and will remain key to our counter-terrorism engagement, for example, through addressing youth extremism in Kenya or intercommunal conflict in Nigeria. At present, the EU provides around €500 million in support of related projects across the African continent, which strengthen local authorities, local communities and civil society actors alike.

Preventing violent extremism and building resilience requires a whole-of-society approach. Good governance is crucial if we want to truly address the ideologies and driving forces behind emergent violent extremism. That means respect for the rule of law, human rights and the principles of democracy and international law. That political question is primarily the responsibility of national leaders, but it will require the continued attention and, at times, action of the Security Council as well.

Let me also make the case for actively including women and girls in our prevention approach. Often, women and girls are victims of oppressive terrorist groups, for example in Nigeria or the Niger at the hands of Boko Haram. Of course, they also have a positive role to play, such as in the women-led start-ups in Tunisia that provide jobs in their community. Recognizing that and empowering them to be active members of society — economically, politically and culturally — will make them and their societies more resistant to extremist influences in the long run.

In closing, West Africa requires our immediate attention to stem the risks of spillover from advancing terrorist actors. The EU is stepping up its security support to the coastal countries in the Gulf of Guinea through its "arc of stability" policy. Allow me here to also commend Ghana for organizing the next conference on the Accra Initiative next week, and for Ghana's leadership in the region.

In the longer term, we need to not only further our shared security agenda, but also to foster sustainable development and improved governance. The economic and social challenges facing the Governments in West Africa and the Sahel are manifold and will only be compounded by the impact that climate change will inevitably have on the region. Addressing that will remain a long-term shared responsibility of African nations, the United Nations, the EU and other partners. The EU can be counted on to remain committed, engaged and present on the ground.

The President: I thank Ms. Von Seherr-Thoss for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Ero.

Ms. Ero: I thank Deputy Secretary-General Mohammed, Chairperson Faki and Ms. Von Seherr-Thoss for their remarks.

The International Crisis Group is an international conflict prevention organization that has long had a special focus on Africa. I was Director of the Africa programme from 2011 to 2021. The issues before us today are therefore of particular interest both to me personally and to the Crisis Group.

The Crisis Group has published analysis of the African-led stabilization and counter-terrorism missions under discussion today, including the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad basin. A year ago, we published a briefing on the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), reflecting on the Security Council debates at the time. We have focused on those missions for three reasons.

First, we believe that conflicts involving non-State armed groups, including jihadi groups, will be a source of instability in Africa for some time to come.

Secondly, we assess that robust, African-led missions are well positioned to counter those threats, but that they can be effective only if they are properly and reliably resourced. Like it or not, the best way to resource those missions is through some sort of United Nations mechanism.

Thirdly — and perhaps provocatively in the context of this debate — the Crisis Group also believes that those stabilization missions alone cannot stem the threat of non-State armed groups. There is a role for the use of force against jihadis. The military operations that come as part of robust stabilization and counter-terrorism missions are a crucial component of any effort against such groups, but those operations must be subordinate to a political strategy. They should be part of a broader set of responses, including projects to provide basic services and better governance to populations in areas in which non-State armed groups have gained influence. At times, although it is hard, that political strategy must contemplate engaging in dialogue with non-State armed groups — something often seen as a taboo — to resolve both humanitarian and political issues.

I will return to that call for dialogue at the end of my remarks, but let me first make the case for supporting regionally led stabilization operations to counter non-State armed groups. The case for investing in stability in Africa hardly needs repetition here. The continent is now the centre of civil wars in the world, and jihadi groups are often actors in those wars. Non-State armed groups and jihadi organizations both fuel and profit from those conflicts, building power bases in places where State control is minimal or non-existent owing to violence. Jihadis have tended to gain strength in places where the State has collapsed, often moving in to exploit opportunities in existing war zones.

In some cases, notably Mali, the Security Council has sent Blue Helmet peacekeepers as part of the response to such threats. But United Nations peacekeeping forces are not designed or equipped to fight extended counter-terrorism campaigns, as we have seen in Gao and Kidal. Such operations are not formally part of Blue Helmets' mandates, but often other components of the mandate, such as the protection of civilians, inevitably entail confrontation with militants.

As the Crisis Group has recently argued, the Council should do a serious stock-taking of whether United Nations forces such as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali are fit for purpose in such cases. But if Blue Helmets cannot do the job, who can? African-led stabilization operations are at least one potential answer.

As the Crisis Group noted more than a year ago, African Union (AU) forces in Somalia can claim some success in the battle against the Al-Shabaab jihadi group. Between 2011 and 2012, and at great cost to Ugandan, Burundian, Kenyan and Somali partner forces, AMISOM ended Al-Shabaab's formal control of Mogadishu and Kismayo, the country's second-largest city, prised swathes of territory out of militants' hands and provided much-needed security for two electoral cycles. We can now add that Somalia's most recent electoral cycle was also a success. It is hard to imagine that vote happening without the AU Mission holding the line against Al-Shabaab.

Missions of that type often face challenges. These include not only tough opponents, but also tense relations with the national Governments and local populations they aim to assist. One of the most serious headaches for missions of that type is donor fatigue. When African officials and military planners look at how to tackle non-State armed groups in situations such as in the Sahel and Somalia, they do not just have to think about threats on the ground, they also have to worry about whether the partners who back their missions will keep providing the necessary financial and other resources they need to deliver on their mandate. That makes the medium- and long-term planning that is crucial for such operations very difficult. Policymakers in the countries — often but not exclusively in North America and Europe, and often members of the Council — that fund those missions face a mirror image of the same problem. For those donors, it is hard to assess whether the resources they offer will have a real impact.

In the case of Somalia last year, the Crisis Group looked at both African and Western perceptions of stabilization operations in the country. We found that European donors in particular appreciated the risks African troops took, but feared that they were funding an expensive status quo. It therefore behoves the Council to ask how to offer missions authorized by the African Union more systematic and predictable funding in order to allow them to plan, operate and deliver better.

That topic is hardly new. Members know that the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council have been debating how to provide AU missions with reliable funds for years. Many studies have concluded that the only really credible option is a mechanism to enable the Security Council to direct United Nations assessed contributions to African-led stabilization missions.

The Crisis Group agrees with that analysis, although, in every individual crisis and conflict, both the United Nations and the AU will need to explore whether an African-led mission is the right operational choice. In 2020 we published a report reviewing those debates. As we recognized in the report, entitled *The Price of Peace: Securing United Nations Financing for AU Peace Operations*, there are numerous obstacles to establishing a solid mechanism for channelling United Nations funding to African-led operations. Cash is not the only issue. The United Nations and the AU still have a lot of work to do to define the rules that would govern the political oversight of future United Nations-funded, African-led operations, as well as the mechanisms for assessing their operational performance and accounting procedures to oversee their finances.

As the International Crisis Group argued back in 2020, it is time for the representatives of the United Nations and the African Union to engage in a serious joint effort to work out answers to questions about how United Nations-AU funding will work. That is partly a job for the two organizations' secretariats. But the members of the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council also need to make a political effort to agree on the terms for future funding and operations. I heartily encourage the Security Council to take steps in that direction today.

I want to conclude by reminding the Council that we cannot address the challenges of non-State armed groups and jihadist movements in Africa with technical fixes alone. And we cannot and should not ask Africa's soldiers to try to solve those problems through military means alone. Military operations against non-State groups can secure territory, protect civilians, deter further violence and create space for non-military conflict resolution. But it is rare — in fact so far it is unheard of — that military operations alone can defeat movements that are quite deeply entrenched, if not necessarily popular, in parts of society. The question is, what can we do to complement military operations? Let me leave the Council with three points to consider.

First, providing basic services is a crucial short-term counter-terrorism tool. Groups such as Al-Shabaab and local branches of Al-Qaida or the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham thrive by occupying areas that Governments cannot control, and in some cases by providing basic services to inhabitants. We need to direct more funds to help Governments deliver such services alongside stabilization operations. Ousting jihadists from areas they control is not enough. It is crucial to win over the populations in those areas, too.

Secondly, governance is an essential medium-term counter-terrorism tool. Building on service provision, the only effective way to close the space available to non-State armed groups is to show civilians that the State can govern in ways that respond to their needs.

Finally, dialogue should be part of the counter-terrorism toolkit. The International Crisis Group's research and interactions with non-State armed groups leave us convinced that dialogue with militant leaders is worth exploring. Talks about humanitarian access often happen already. In some cases, more political talks about violence-reduction measures and local governance, or simply testing whether such groups are open to wider compromise, might be feasible. At the International Crisis Group, we have pushed Governments in the Sahel to seek dialogue with armed groups that could for instance encourage local ceasefire accords that could ease suffering in rural areas, open up space for the restoration of State services and enable residents to return to their homes and rebuild their livelihoods. There are risks to such approaches, but they should not be ruled out as an option.

The International Crisis Group therefore encourages the Security Council to reinforce the United Nations mechanisms that support African-led missions in fighting non-State armed groups. But it also encourages the United Nations, the AU and other African actors, above all national and local actors, to keep an open mind about talking to those groups specifically, an approach that some authorities, notably in countries such as the Niger, have publicly adopted in recent months. That may seem provocative and perhaps contradictory. I agree that it may be provocative, but I do not actually think that it is contradictory. The conflicts that destabilize several African regions are not only about counter-terrorism. They are often rooted in concrete grievances with State authorities and elites whose members live in distant capitals and whose level of public legitimacy is dismal. The use of force should

always be part of a wider political strategy. That is true from the Sahel to the Horn and wherever non-State armed groups exist. I hope today's debate will be an opportunity to think about how to get that balance right in each case.

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

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the President of Ghana.

The last time I was in this Chamber, I came in my capacity as the Foreign Minister of Ghana (see S/PV.4933). I am happy to be here once again, 16 years later, to address the Security Council, this time as President of the Republic. Having overseen my country's successful bid for a non-permanent seat on the Council, I want to assure all Member States that as we have often stated, Ghana will work to address our collective interests as spelt out in the Charter of the United Nations. That is why Ghana chose "Counter-terrorism in Africa: an imperative for peace, security and development" as the theme for today's high-level debate.

Terrorism has always posed a danger to international peace and security and continues to threaten peaceful coexistence between and within nations. In our current circumstances, the forms and manifestations of terrorism, especially on the African continent, have claimed the lives of thousands of innocent people, rendered millions homeless and handicapped the ability of many economies to pursue growth and sustainable development. The Sahel, for example, with a population of some 300 million people, accounted for the highest incidence of terrorist attacks recorded between January and June of this year, a period in which such attacks killed 5,412 people across Africa. Indeed, the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism tells us that 179 of the 699 attacks in Africa this year occurred in the Sahel, with 1,909 fatalities.

While we can admit that the political context of the Security Council's involvement is complex and the operating environment dangerous, our collective inaction, even as we contemplate whether or how to intervene, risks the further spread of instability across the continent. Some Sahelian and West African countries have already been overrun by terrorists and other armed groups. They now feel motivated and emboldened to extend their reach of influence to the coastal countries of West Africa in a grand attempt to get access to the high seas and create a vicious linkage between terrorism

and piracy. The international community, particularly the Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, therefore cannot choose to be neutral in the design and implementation of the specific responses required to confront the threat of international terrorism. We acknowledge that the fight against terrorism can be a protracted one that could take a number of years, but with collective efforts, terrorism and those behind its evil acts can and will eventually be defeated.

We reiterate Ghana's strong rejection and condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It is important to underscore that arresting the deteriorating security situation in the Sahel and West Africa will require urgent action predicated on concerted efforts if we are to succeed in our attempts to bring progress, prosperity and development to the peoples of the region. In that regard, I would like to share three key points for the Council's consideration.

First, in addressing the threats relating to terrorism in Africa, it is important that we leverage the role of the African Union and its regional economic communities in order to raise a robust and well-resourced force to confront terrorists and other armed groups, alongside other peace operation initiatives. Ghana welcomes the ongoing joint strategic assessment of the security, governance and development issues of the Sahel, just as we encourage the high-level panel led by the respected former President of the Republic of the Niger, His Excellency Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou, to leverage the best elements of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, the Accra Initiative, the Nouakchott Process and the Multinational Joint Task Force and consider recommendations for a unified and restructured regional force. We urge the Council to be supportive of such efforts.

Secondly, the burden of confronting terrorism cannot be borne by those in the region alone. It requires strong collaboration among the United Nations, the African Union and the regional economic communities, particularly the Economic Community of West African States, to address the question of adequate, predictable and sustainable financing for regional-led operations. The African Union has demonstrated its commitment and capacity to effectively manage such financing and comply with the required human rights standards in such operations. The Security Council and the wider international community must play their part if there is a desire to have continuing relevance.

Thirdly, the structure and approach of international support to countering terrorism, including in the Sahel, must be pre-emptive rather than reactive. There is therefore the need for the Council and the wider international community to address the underlying drivers of instability through the building of resilience in conflict-prone regions, including in the areas of promoting democratic values, development and State services. International support must be fully placed behind deliberate interventions to promote inclusive governance and the extension of effective State authority in several parts of our territories in order to meet the expectations of our largely youthful populations, who, in some instances, unfortunately fell victim to the radicalized messages of extremists.

The Security Council's support for the adequate, predictable and sustainable financing of African-led operations would be an important starting point if it is to continue to assume its responsibility as the primary actor in the maintenance of international peace and security.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the members of the Council to revisit the vexed issue of the reform of the United Nations system, particularly the Security Council, and to do so on the basis of the African Common Position on United Nations reform, as expressed in the Ezulwini Consensus, if the authority of the Council, which, in recent times, appears to have been devalued because of its anachronistic structure, is indeed to be restored.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mr. Immongault (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to convey to you, Mr. President, the appreciation of His Excellency Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Republic of Gabon and Head of State, for your invitation to take part in this high-level debate of the Security Council. The President of the Gabonese Republic also asked me to convey his regret at not being able to participate with you in this meeting, while doing me the great honour of delivering, on his behalf, his statement to the Council.

"Terrorism, the manifestations of which are constantly evolving, is an assault on the common values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitutive Act of the African Union. Today the threat is more difficult to identify and thwart, and its capacity to cause harm is measured by the number of terrorist attacks, the continued existence of operational networks and their ability to defy stabilization efforts in many parts of the world, in particular the Arabian peninsula, North Africa, West and Central Africa, East Africa, South-East Asia and South Asia.

"Terrorism is proving to be a significant transnational threat that no Government or organization can combat alone. Moreover, since no country is immune, coordinated action at the national, regional and global levels is required. That action must be as determined and multidimensional as the threat itself. Above all, it must be based on a more robust multilateralism.

"Africa has become one of the main front lines in the fight against terrorism. In its propaganda, the Islamic State is increasingly claiming responsibility for terrorist acts in Africa to the extent that it significantly affects the development and prosperity paths of African countries. Fortunately, African leaders understood that and committed themselves to the scale of the challenge. On 28 May, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, meeting in Malabo, adopted an important declaration, in which they reiterated their condemnation of, and resolve to combat, all forms and manifestations of extremist violence on the continent.

"The evidence is overwhelming: no African region is spared, and the upsurge in terrorist acts is causing destruction, loss of human life, massive population displacement and destitution everywhere. The terrorist front in the so-called tri-border area of the Sahel is now the hub of an asymmetric war, whose end no one can foresee. It is a war that is straining the limited capacities of national security and defence forces and is destabilizing entire regions. New technologies, including social media, encrypted communication tools and cryptocurrency, are being used for propaganda, the radicalization of new recruits and the perpetration of atrocities. Similarly, the illegal exploitation of natural resources, alongside drug trafficking, human trafficking and kidnapping for ransom, are emerging as the main sources of funding for terrorist groups.

"If the response of the international community is not more determined and immediate following the warning issued by African leaders, the threat will unfortunately increase. It will further undermine peace and security in Africa. It will hamper efforts to achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. It will leave no prospect for building the Africa we want.

"Aware of the magnitude of the threat and the danger, Africa is resolutely committed to stepping up regional counter-terrorism initiatives, including the Group of Five for the Sahel, the Accra Initiative, the Multinational Joint Task Force and, more recently, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). Those commendable efforts deserve to be supported by the international community with adequate financial, logistical and material resources, while taking decisive action to cut off the sources of funding for terrorist groups. I would like to take this opportunity to call for the mobilization of resources to ensure the success of ATMIS, as well as to welcome the significant contribution of the European Union.

"The approach of highlighting the peace-governance-development nexus seems the most appropriate to break the cycle of sudden political transitions and chronic insecurity. We need to tailor our response in a consistent manner, as fragmented responses fuel the interests of terrorist groups, who exploit systemic flaws to foment a breeding ground for violence.

"The humanitarian crises resulting from that scourge are becoming increasingly complex with the impact of climate change in Africa, compounded by the increase in violent extremism, poverty and inequality associated with the recurrent political and socioeconomic crises. An effective fight against terrorism in Africa therefore requires a holistic approach and addressing the socioeconomic challenges faced by the affected countries, with particular attention to the root causes, the education of young people, inclusive development, strengthening State authority throughout the country, poverty resulting from a lack of opportunities and improving the living conditions of the disadvantaged.

"Another crucial area in which we need to strengthen our partnership is cooperation and intelligence, particularly in identifying and tracking funding sources and online money transactions in order to curb the illicit activities without which terrorism could not thrive.

"The Council must redouble its efforts, increase its means of action and boldly support African peace support initiatives and operations. The front against terrorism must be unified, with the full commitment of everyone, everywhere.

(*spoke in English*)

"For Gabon, the joint efforts of the United Nations and the African Union, combined with the active participation of the countries of the region and subregional organizations, must focus on people in local communities. They are the ones who suffer daily attacks from terrorist groups.

"Our efforts will hardly have a lasting impact without a coherent improvement of local strategies based on the engagement of women, youth and the most vulnerable populations, as well as the prevention, resolution and consolidation mechanisms of regional and subregional organizations.

"Development, governance and security policies must go hand in hand with an absolute determination to uphold the values of social cohesion and the prohibition of hate speech, with a view to maximizing the impact of our efforts to promote lasting peace and stability in the region.

"In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the fight against terrorism is absolutely an imperative for peace, security and development in Africa. The commitment of the international community in fragile regions must be commensurate with the scale of the threat. It takes only one weak link in the chain to shake the entire system of collective security."

Mr. Al Nahyan (United Arab Emirates): I thank Ghana for organizing and presiding over this important discussion on the growing threat of terrorism in coastal West Africa and the Sahel. In a region suffering from extremism, the Accra Initiative is a vivid illustration of Ghana's wise vision and active role in countering extremism and terrorism in the region. I would also like to thank all the briefers for their valuable insights.

There is no doubt that terrorist groups have had a particularly corrosive impact on various regions in Africa. According to the Global Terrorism Index, almost

half of the terrorism-related deaths last year were in sub-Saharan Africa. Extremism leads to terrorism and fuels terrorist groups. It greatly hampers productivity and development, including social development opportunities, while undercutting access to basic services and challenging State authority. Extremism dashes the hopes and aspirations of local communities, particularly the youth, and undermines the creation of economic opportunities. The impacts of that scourge extend beyond national borders. Any meaningful and effective response must therefore concurrently address the root causes and the transnational nature of the threat. That is where regional and international coordination must come in.

The African Union (AU) and subregional organizations are central to countering extremism and terrorism. The United Arab Emirates commends the efforts of African leaders to strengthen the African Peace and Security Architecture in order to meet today's challenges — chief among them cross-border terrorism. That sentiment was reflected in the May meeting in Malabo convened by the African Union Heads of State, who committed to developing a continental strategic plan of action on countering terrorism and to establishing an AU ministerial committee on counter-terrorism.

We stress the considerable importance the United Arab Emirates attaches to combating extremism and terrorism. From our own experience, we know that it is essential to have effective policies in place to address the challenge. We have strongly supported regional and international efforts, including through contributions to the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force and our membership in the Global Coalition against Da'esh. We have also supported the establishment of the Coalition's Africa Focus Group, which will work to counter the threat posed by Da'esh across Africa.

I would also like to share three recommendations for our collective pursuit of countering extremism and terrorism in coastal West Africa and the Sahel.

First, effectively countering extremism requires an integrated approach that combines all the tools at the disposal of the international community in a way that addresses the local contexts of the threat. The extension and maintenance of State authority is key and can be sustained in the long term only through the provision of basic services and support for sustainable development, both of which enhance stability and weaken the ability of extremist actors to exploit the grievances of affected populations as a tool to radicalize and recruit.

Inclusive governance is critical to addressing the root causes of extremism and terrorism through building community resilience.

Countering extremism in all its forms is essential. Prevention includes the development and deployment of effective counter-narratives, increasing awareness and promoting the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. However, that must be done in coordination with the leaders of local communities, including religious leaders. That is critical, as terrorist groups, such as Da'esh, hijack the moral practices of religion in order to spread extremism and recruit fighters.

Secondly, climate change has the potential to exacerbate the consequences of terrorism. Shifting climate patterns, such as extreme-weather events, can lead to the loss of livelihoods, thereby allowing extremist actors to exploit the resulting economic vulnerabilities and attempt to recruit local populations by offering alternative sources of income. Well-financed climate adaptation strategies are not just a moral imperative for all of us; they are a security requirement to combat extremism in Africa and elsewhere.

Thirdly, the frameworks built by the Council over the past two decades must be adjusted in order to ensure that they contain the right tools to address the threats of extremism and terrorism. Da'esh, Al-Qaida and their affiliates remain a clear threat to international peace and security, but we cannot neglect other terrorist organizations, including those labelled as such by the Council, whose activities continue to evolve. In order to be able to keep pace with threats to international peace and security, the Council must consider the challenges arising from a counter-terrorism approach focused on Da'esh and Al-Qaida, to the exclusion of others.

We must also delegitimize terrorist groups that claim to act in the name of religion or that suggest that they constitute a State or province. Accordingly, we should refrain from using the terms "Islamic State" or "ISIL" in reference to Da'esh and its affiliates in coastal West Africa and the Sahel, and elsewhere. We must deny terrorist groups their self-proclaimed connections to Islam.

In conclusion, we affirm the full support of the United Arab Emirates for all international and regional efforts to combat terrorism and extremism on the African continent. They must succeed in achieving the stability, security and peace that Africa and all its people deserve.

Ms. Sherwood-Randall (United States of America): I want to begin by expressing my appreciation to you, Mr. President, for bringing us all together and for elevating this vital conversation. Your country is on the front lines, and you are surrounded by security threats on your borders. Your Government has developed a thoughtful approach to countering terrorism, and you have distinguished yourself as a regional leader who is committed to deepening collaboration and cooperation with your neighbours in the face of this existential threat.

I want to thank Deputy Secretary-General Mohammed, Chairperson Faki Mahamat, Managing Director Von Seherr-Thoss and Ms. Ero for their remarks this morning. I have listened very carefully, and I have learned a lot from what they have said.

The United States fully agrees that none of us can effectively meet the terrorism challenge alone. Our experience since 11 September 2001, and even before then, has proven that we are much stronger when we stand together in the fight against terrorism so that we can enable people to build peaceful lives and live free from fear. This morning, I would like to discuss the growing threat to Africa and how the United States is approaching it, and, most important, I would like to offer some perspective on how we can do even more together.

As we all know, countering terrorism has been a top priority for the United States for more than two decades, but, over the years, the threat has evolved. It has become more ideologically diverse, and it has become more geographically diffuse. Nowhere is the evolution in the global terrorism landscape more vivid than in Africa, where terrorist groups, from Al-Qaida branches to affiliates of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), now collectively occupy vast swaths of territory and extract benefits from millions of suffering people.

Across every region of the vast continent, they brutalize and terrorize civilians. In Burkina Faso, terrorist groups attack villagers and displace farmers from their sole source of income. In Nigeria, ISIS affiliates have massacred worshippers in churches. In Mozambique last year, hundreds of Islamic militants linked to ISIS laid siege to an entire town, holding guests in a hotel hostage. In Mali, violent extremists continue to kill United Nations peacekeepers, making the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali one of the most dangerous peacekeeping missions in the world. In Kenya, Al-Shabaab threatens election workers and polling sites and has attacked hotels, shopping malls and other locations in which both citizens and foreigners congregate. And in Somalia, the group targets and kills civilians, including, just two weeks ago, more than 100 Somali educators and first responders during tragic bombings in which an additional 300 people were injured.

Across the region, terrorists are also attacking Americans and other foreign citizens, including from the countries around this table. Still, there is reason for optimism where populations are rising up against terror to reclaim their communities. The United States stands with African Governments and with African people who are confronting the threat every day. Counter-terrorism successes are hard won, and they often take place out of public view. Unfortunately, terrorist acts are far more visible. According to the United States Department of Defense, violence from militant Islamic groups in Africa has risen 300 per cent over the past decade, with 95 per cent of that increase concentrated in the Western Sahel and Somalia.

As I have discussed with Presidents Bazoum and Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, and as I expect to do today with President Akufo-Addo, the violence is only rising. That affects all of us. Therefore, as members of the Security Council know, terrorism in Africa is a shared challenge, and it demands our collective response. The United States is doing three key things to tackle the threat. First, we are investing in governance, development and diplomacy. Secondly, we are deepening our ties with our African partners and working to empower them to take the lead in facing the challenge. And, thirdly, we are leveraging the collective strength of the international community, including the United Nations.

I want to take a few minutes to discuss each of those.

First, as I said, we are investing in governance, development and diplomacy, which, as we have heard repeatedly around this table, is essential to addressing the root causes of terrorism. The United States is pursuing an integrated strategy that addresses the drivers of radicalization to violence — a strategy that supports effective governance and recognizes that stability and security are intertwined with opportunity and prosperity. It is not just about fighting terrorists; it is about promoting economic opportunities that offer more attractive alternatives to young recruits than the terrorism enterprise can offer and building institutions and capacity to hold those who commit acts of terror

to account through strong law enforcement and judicial systems.

Secondly, we are deepening our ties with our African partners and empowering them to take the lead on the challenge. I have travelled to Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya and the Niger in my current role. I have seen first-hand how our diplomats, intelligence professionals and military service members rely on local partners to understand and respond to terrorist threats. A successful counter-terrorism strategy in Africa must always be built on and led by the citizens of the countries that we are working to support. Our partners must include local law enforcement, military personnel, public servants and regional bodies, such as the African Union and its regional economic communities. The United States is asking our partners to identify and communicate their counter-terrorism priorities. We will rely on our regional counterparts to tell us what training and support they need. We will do everything we can to enable them to lead across the African continent, and we will empower them to conduct capacity-building efforts that enable more enduring outcomes.

Thirdly, as I said, the United States is leveraging the collective strength of the international community, including the United Nations. More than 15 years ago, every United Nations Member State signed on to the United Nations Global Counter-terrorism Strategy, which promotes a shared vision and a common approach to fighting terrorism. But this threat, as I have mentioned, has changed substantially since we adopted that resolution. The need for collaboration across the world, however, is more important than ever.

The United States will continue working with all partners to strengthen the use of the sanctions regime pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) against terrorists to induce a change in behaviour. We will maintain our intensive work with the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Office of Counter Terrorism and the members of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact to monitor the latest threats. We will expand our collaboration to ensure security assistance is well coordinated so that we maximize our impacts and do not duplicate or waste precious efforts.

I have to be candid. We are eagerly awaiting the recommendations of the ongoing joint assessment on the Sahel — a project undertaken by high-level representatives of the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Group of Five for the Sahel so that we can provide effective support where our partners have decided it is most needed. The outcomes of the report will be essential to shaping our next steps.

Finally, our joint efforts must be grounded in democracy and built on respect for the rule of law and human rights in order to succeed over the long term. When nations use terrorism as a pretext to silence political dissent or interfere with the activities of civil society, the effort to counter terror can actually become counterproductive and contribute to greater divisiveness, dysfunction and violence. Similarly, when armed mercenary groups, including the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group, commit human rights abuses, the security environment becomes bleaker, and citizens pay the price.

Let me close with the following: as we all know, countering terrorism is a demanding task, and it is an enduring one. The conditions that give rise to terrorism are complex, and the perpetrators are innovative and ruthless. But by investing in governance, diplomacy and development, empowering local partners and, most importantly, working together in strong and collaborative partnerships, both bilaterally and multilaterally, we can more effectively counter the metastasizing terrorism threats that we are facing in Africa. I look forward to continuing our conversation, including next month at the United States-Africa Leaders' Summit in Washington, D.C. Security, stability and countering terrorism will be top priorities on the agenda for the Heads of State and Government whom President Biden will be welcoming to the White House. Our goal is to generate greater understanding for and commitment to the work we must do together to tackle the region's peace and security challenges.

I thank you once again, Mr. President, for convening this gathering and for allowing me the opportunity to address the Council today.

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): On behalf of Kenya's delegation, I want to say how delighted we are to see you preside over the Security Council during this important debate, Mr. President. We salute you for your leadership in the quest for sustainable peace, security and development in Africa. I also want to thank Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohamed, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Ms. Benedikta von Seherr-Thoss and Ms. Comfort Ero for their briefings.

As we debate this important threat, terrorist affiliates of Al-Qaida and the Islamic State of Iraq and

the Sham (ISIS) are expanding in multiple regions in Africa. They are embedded in local, national and cross-border conflicts while retaining key strategic links with global networks. They are capitalizing on instability caused by insufficient governance, local grievances and humanitarian emergencies caused by extreme weather patterns that are partly due to climate change. States are hard pressed to provide robust security or basic services, as they lack the capacity, political stability and financial resources they need to overcome their challenges.

In the Sahel and West Africa, the terrorist threat is escalating and expanding its footprint, with multiple countries under threat with varying levels of intensity. Various strategies have been developed, but most have been only partially implemented. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali has done as well as it could, given its mandate and resources, but it has come nowhere close to degrading the threat to an acceptable level. The initiative of the Group of Five for the Sahel is only a shadow of the hopes that the people and Governments of the region placed in it. The forces deployed by countries partnering with the region also appear inadequate to the challenges for a number of reasons, not least because of mushrooming unconstitutional changes of Government. Even as military efforts against the terrorist groups falter or make only partial progress, critical political and economic measures are not advancing with the urgency and robustness needed. Not enough is being done to address entrenched and intensifying grievances about political and economic exclusion based on ethnic or religious identity. The equitable provision of basic services is not keeping pace with demand as Government financial resources dwindle in the aftermath of the shocks of the coronavirus disease pandemic and global economic decline.

We are at an important fork in the road. United Nations peacekeeping, which began as an innovation, is not innovating enough to address terrorist groups that are threats to international peace and security. The main reason for the existence of the United Nations is to protect international peace and security by ensuring universal respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States. By that standard, terrorist groups in Africa are challenging the fundamental basis for the United Nations, and that is not acceptable. We urge the Council to learn from and respond to the situations in Somalia and Mozambique. Both countries are suffering from brutal attacks and peace-shattering

operations by Al-Qaida and ISIS affiliates. But their successes against the terrorists offer us an example and perhaps even a template of how we can achieve lasting victory.

In Somalia, ISIS remains small but is an important link in a global franchise. Campaigns in the Great Lakes and Southern Africa are under way under its umbrella. The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) is standing shoulder to shoulder with the people and Government of Somalia against a destructive Al-Qaida affiliate. I will not refer to it by name this morning, in a sign of our respect for the decision by the Government of Somalia and the country's religious leaders to strip the group of its name's association with youth. They have asked that the group be named Khawarij to reflect the fact that it is a deviant sect exploiting religion for evil and inhuman purposes. This is part of a total war against the terrorists by the people and Government of Somalia under the leadership of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. In Somalia we are witnessing what a determined Government can achieve when it rallies its forces and its people. In ATMIS and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, the international community is standing with the people of Somalia. The European Union and other partners are making important contributions financially, with military training and even through the kinetic targeting of terrorist leaders. While success has taken a long time to achieve and the Al-Qaida group is still persisting in its efforts, we can be more confident that if the effort is maintained, the country will be liberated.

The ISIS-affiliate in Mozambique initially made progress in its campaign of terrorism. However, Mozambican forces, with strong support from Rwanda and forces from the Southern Africa Development Community, have retaken ground and are protecting civilians and economic activity. I would now like to draw some conclusions from our observations and offer recommendations for our collective action.

First, we need to stand with Governments, as we are doing with Somalia, by mandating and deploying robust African forces assembled by the African Union and regional communities. They need adequate and predictable funding, including through United Nations assessed contributions, if we are serious about ensuring that the United Nations can truly protect international peace and security. Another way to give support is by ensuring that Security Council mandates are supportive of Governments that show a strong commitment to

fighting international terrorist groups militarily, politically and economically. It is important in that regard to review the sanctions regime for Somalia in order to ensure that the Government is empowered to use its full sovereign will to defeat the Al-Qaida and ISIS affiliates in its territory.

Simultaneously, we must tighten the sanctions that are most clearly targeted at these groups' ability to raise and send funds regionally and internationally, assemble explosives and recruit and transport foreign fighters. Their leaders should also come under stronger sanctions that are automatically deployed based on their identification by the multiple Al-Qaida and ISIS monitoring groups in the Security Council. We need to listen closely to the needs of the Somali Government and critical stakeholders, especially as ATMIS transitions, to ensure that it is in step with the Somali forces' growing capabilities and success in winning and effectively holding territory. The response in the Sahel, West Africa and the Great Lakes by the Council and the international community should be more like that in Somalia and Mozambique.

Secondly, increased capacity-building for national and regional military actions against terrorist groups is urgently required. That includes financial, training and infrastructural support focusing on anti- and counter-terrorism efforts. We should ensure the full operationalization of the efforts of the Office of Counter-Terrorism in Africa, such as the regional Programme Office in Nairobi.

Thirdly, States in the region must endeavour to undertake ambitious legal and political efforts aimed at ensuring religious, regional and ethnic inclusivity. The State's ability to promote and protect fair and equitable inclusion must be regarded as a core competence. Without it, the State may appear strong in the short term but will suffer fragilities that are quickly exposed by militarized grievances. Inclusion is a key action to preventing terrorism, insurgency and political instability. The Peacebuilding Commission is an important resource in this area. It can undertake catalysing initiatives that are then adopted by the Government in a more entrenched and far-reaching manner.

Fourthly, the Security Council must equally apply its counter-terrorism architecture against terrorist groups and their affiliates, particularly those in Africa. This should include appropriate listing of these groups in the sanctions regime adopted by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), where they appropriately belong. The fight against global terrorism cannot and will not be won by applying double standards in the face of such a serious threat.

Fifthly, resilient communities must be built by resourcing national disengagement and reintegration capabilities. To this end, there must be coordinated action among countries of the region, particularly in the programmes to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate armed groups, including returning foreign and terrorist fighters.

Finally, climate shocks continue to constitute a major driver of conflict and instability, and they provide an environment conducive to entrenching terrorism. The strongest defence against climate change and its attendant security risks is development that enables adaptation, mitigation and resilience. The twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, coincidentally taking place this year in Africa, should lead to a pledge by countries to meet their climate commitments and contribute to the development of climate-change-affected countries in Africa. In this way, we will deny terrorists the breeding ground to thrive.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): At the outset, Mr. President, I would like to say that I am honoured to participate in today's debate, which your country has coordinated. Ghana brings to our attention a situation which, as highlighted by the Deputy Secretary-General, is regional in its enunciation but global in its ability to threaten international peace and security. In this context, I would like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohamed, the Chairperson of African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, the representative of the European External Action Service, Ms. Benedikta von Seherr-Thoss, and the President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Crisis Group, Ms. Comfort Ero, for their insightful remarks.

There may be a perception that at present terrorism is less menacing than it used to be a few years ago. Unfortunately, this assessment is not grounded in reality. It is a misunderstanding that can be attributed to a great extent to insufficient attention by international media outlets to certain parts of the world and the unbalanced treatment terrorism receives according to the region where its effects are directly felt. The expansion of terrorism in Africa is a reality, with serious impacts

on the peace and security of the continent. It should remain a priority on our agenda.

I would like to reiterate Brazil's position that counter-terrorism efforts will only be sustainable and effective if consistent with international law, including the United Nations Charter, international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law. If counter-terrorism takes place at the expense of international legal parameters, it will have defeated its purpose and may contribute to generating additional extremism conducive to terrorism.

While United Nations peacekeeping operations are not a tool for military counter-terrorism actions, they help create and consolidate the conditions for long-term stability and security. They therefore have an inhibiting effect on terrorism. In the same vein, regional and subregional organizations play an important part in containing the spread of terrorism, and, in doing so, they must receive our support.

We commend all the efforts and progress made by the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations in countering terrorism within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The African Union Mission in Somalia, now the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, has been an example by assisting countries of the entire Horn of Africa to reduce Al-Shabaab capacities. Similarly, the Southern African Development Community mission in Mozambique has achieved results in the fight against terrorism in Cabo Delgado. The Accra Initiative may further contribute to containing the spillover of terrorism from the Sahel. We also hope that the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force will overcome its current challenges, since its action is also relevant for countering terrorism in that region and preventing it from spreading to its neighbourhood.

We have been following with great concern the deteriorating security situation in the Sahel. We regret the appalling increase in the number of terrorist acts in the region and their expansion towards the West African coast. The current political instability in the Sahel might accelerate its expansion southwards. In this context, the international community must strengthen support to counter-terrorism initiatives in the region.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, enacted by the most representative body of the United Nations, provides the most comprehensive guidance for the fight against terrorism. In adopting it, Member States recognized the importance of cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in the field, and this cooperation should be centred on capacity-building. Technical cooperation, including South-South cooperation, could be an important tool for strengthening national institutions' capabilities for fighting terrorism.

Furthermore, prevention is instrumental in any sustainable counter-terrorism strategy. I echo the Deputy Secretary-General in underscoring the circumstances in which terrorist groups thrive, the reasons why their ideology attracts young people to their ranks, and the social and economic aspects of the phenomenon. A comprehensive response to terrorism must therefore include policies directed at its root causes, mainly on the development front. For that, we need to value the expertise of regional organizations in addressing local realities and proposing local solutions.

Brazil condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The repudiation of terrorism is a constitutional principle that guides our international relations. Our foreign policy also highly values the role of regional and subregional organizations in securing a safer and more peaceful world. We must not hesitate to support them in combating terrorism.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico warmly welcomes you to the Security Council, Mr. President, and recognizes Ghana's leadership in bringing the issue before us today to the attention of the international community. I also thank all the briefers for their briefings, which have enriched the context of our debate.

My country reaffirms that terrorism constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security and, as such, requires coordinated, forceful and effective responses. We have heard how, for several years now, some regions in Africa have been particularly affected by that scourge. While significant progress has been made on some fronts — thanks, in large part, to regional mobilization — the strategies employed thus far to prevent and combat terrorism have unfortunately not been able to reverse the ongoing spread of that phenomenon in the continent.

Given the urgent need to rethink our approaches to fighting terrorism, it is necessary to integrate the lessons learned. In that connection, I will highlight three points.

First, the deployment of military counter-terrorism operations in regions such as the Sahel, the Lake Chad basin and the Horn of Africa clearly show that such efforts are important to halt the advance of extremist groups. However, in order to be truly effective, those operations must have realistic strategic objectives that are more focused and achievable — and, where possible, achievable over shorter periods of time. The Security Council's analysis of regional situations in Africa reminds us that, when counter-terrorism missions are prolonged over time and their objectives are expanded, they lose effectiveness and can provoke responses that run counter to their objectives. That leads to fatigue, both among donors and public opinion in the countries in which those forces operate.

In addition, we have seen how concentrating resources on the security component in regions such as West Africa and the Sahel can be to the detriment of the civilian administration, which is responsible for providing basic services to the population. That imbalance between the different tasks of the State can, in turn, have negative effects on governance and even pose a challenge to the constitutional order.

Secondly, we believe that military efforts should be framed within a broad political strategy, the main objective of which is to transform the conditions fuelling the emergence of terrorism. Mexico reiterates that particular attention must be paid to combating inequality, exclusion, discrimination and corruption, among others. That is the only way in which it will be possible to more successfully neutralize the recruitment and mobilization mechanisms of terrorist organizations.

Unfortunately, the economic and social challenges linked to the effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic, as well as the current food and energy crises, threaten to exacerbate inequalities, particularly in the most vulnerable countries. In addition, the impact of extreme weather events — a consequence of climate change — is depriving entire communities of their livelihoods.

It is therefore urgent to strengthen social policies and to prioritize peacebuilding activities in order to prevent the prevailing difficult economic and social situation from becoming an even greater security crisis. We therefore insist on the relevance of the peacebuilding architecture and the need to align international cooperation objectives in order to focus on addressing the structural causes of violence.

Thirdly, Mexico recognizes the various existing regional mechanisms to address terrorism in Africa. The Accra Initiative, the Group of Five for the Sahel and the Nairobi process are examples of regional willingness to respond to the activity of terrorist groups and therefore deserve the support of the international community.

In order to limit the ability of terrorists to act, it is necessary to prevent them from having access to weapons, especially small arms and light weapons. That can be achieved by strengthening the fight against the illicit trafficking of those weapons and their diversion, in accordance with resolution 2616 (2021), adopted by the Council in December at the initiative of Mexico.

Finally, my country believes that the fight against terrorism must prioritize the protection of civilians and the promotion of human rights. An exclusively military strategy only reinforces the spiral of violence, in addition to the fact that such operations sometimes have a serious impact on the civilian population, particularly women and children.

We therefore call for regional mobilization efforts to include actions to strengthen democratic governance and the rule of law. Judicial cooperation must be an important element in the strategy to fight against terrorist organizations and to ensure victims' access to justice.

Mrs. Kamboj (India): Let me begin by expressing gratitude to you, Sir, for your leadership of the Council and by congratulating the delegation of Ghana for organizing this important open debate on counter-terrorism in Africa. The Secretary-General's observation last month in Mumbai, India, while paying tribute to the victims of the 26 November 2008 terror attack, that terrorism is pure evil and one with which we can never compromise is reflective of the gravity of the issue not just for Africa, but for the entire world.

I also take this opportunity to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed, and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, for their respective statements. I also thank Ms. Comfort Ero and Ms. Benedikta von Seherr-Thoss for their very useful insights.

Even after the end of colonialism, for several decades now, many countries in Africa have continued to face serious security threats from terrorism, armed groups, transnational organized crime and drugs and arms trafficking. Perhaps you, Sir, would agree with

me that those challenges have a negative impact on their socioeconomic development.

Terrorism's footprint in Africa, particularly in the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions, has expanded significantly in recent years. That trend has constantly been highlighted by the Secretary-General in his biannual report on the threat of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (S/2022/576), as well as by the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team in its periodical reports. Ghana's concept note for today's debate (S/2022/822, annex) also eloquently brings out the counter-terrorism challenges faced by African countries, particularly in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and Central Africa.

Terrorist groups in Africa continue to target civilians, security and peacekeeping forces across conflict zones. The main recipients of their atrocities, sadly, remain women, children and other vulnerable sections of the population. Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin, affiliated with Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, has expanded its activities in and around the Sahel and West Africa towards the coastal regions. Groups linked to Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, as well as Boko Haram, have also continued to expand around the eastern and northern shores of Lake Chad. In Mozambique, the Islamic State Central Africa Province has become emblematic of the influence of ISIL in Africa. The attacks by terrorist groups against United Nations peacekeepers, particularly through the use of improvised explosive devices, is alarming. A strong, effective and coherent response that reflects the international community's collective commitment to defeating the scourge of terrorism is therefore essential, in Africa as elsewhere. In that regard, I would like to submit the following key points for the consideration of the Council.

First, the threat of terrorism in Africa is real. It is a threat to all of us, and not an isolated one. We live in an interconnected and interdependent world where no one is safe unless everyone is safe. However, the response of the international community to the terrorist threat in Africa remains less than satisfactory. We have to show strong political will to help African countries address the threat of terrorism.

Second, easy access to new and emerging technologies has been further exploited by terrorist groups in Africa for the purposes of disseminating their propaganda, transferring funds and raising finances.

Drones have been used to monitor the movement of security forces and peacekeepers, making them vulnerable to terrorist attacks. I would like to remind the Council that last month India hosted a special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council to discuss that issue in a holistic manner. The Council's collective resolve was reflected in the Committee's adoption of the Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes. We very much hope that the Delhi Declaration will pave the way for the formulation of a normative framework at the United Nations to address that threat.

Third, the ideological influence that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Al-Qaida have over their affiliates in Africa, as well as the linkages between them, should not be underestimated. Following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, the risk of ISIL affiliates and other terrorist groups in Africa imitating it in Africa remains high. In that context, we underline the need to fully implement resolution 2593 (2021).

Fourth, it is possible that by presenting themselves as viable political stakeholders, ISIL and Al-Qaida affiliates may try to influence the national reconciliation efforts in countries that are trying to establish democratic institutions. Apart from that, such countries may also co-opt ISIL and Al-Qaida elements in order to achieve political stability and peace. In our view, such actions are both futile and dangerous. Terrorists are not wedded to the democratic polity, nor do they have faith in democratic values. Engaging them in national reconciliation will only give terrorism legitimacy. What we need is a zero-tolerance policy on terrorism.

Fifth, we need to abandon double standards when dealing with terrorism. We cannot divide terrorists into good and bad categories based on political convenience. The same yardstick should be applied to all terrorists. They should all be countered, without exceptions of any kind.

Sixth, we need to acknowledge the links between terrorism, transnational organized crime and piracy. That nexus facilitates human trafficking, drug trafficking and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Improvised explosive devices have become a weapon of choice for terrorist groups in Africa. While the countries of the region should demonstrate political will and manage arms and ammunition effectively, United Nations agencies can also support the efforts

of States through capacity-building aimed at breaking that nexus.

Seventh, the Security Council must update its toolkit to deal with the increasing threat to international peace and security posed by terrorism. Robust mandates for United Nations peace operations have not brought much success either, and the reason is simple — traditional peacekeeping cannot be the answer for countering terrorism.

Eighth, regional and subregional organizations enjoy advantages with regard to language and situational awareness. They can respond more quickly and effectively in combating terrorism because they have a better understanding of the complexities involved. Africa's leading role in addressing African problems through African solutions therefore needs to be supported. Regional security initiatives, such as the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique, the Multinational Joint Task Force and the Group of Five for the Sahel, have proved their resilience in effectively dealing with the threat of terrorism. Those are Africa's homegrown solutions, led by African countries that best understand their issues. The international community should provide sustainable and adequate financial and logistical support to those regional security initiatives. That is all the more necessary against the backdrop of the receding presence of international security forces in the Sahel. If the affected countries do not receive that assistance, they will try to seek it elsewhere.

Ninth, several States lack the legal operational frameworks and capacities necessary for countering the threat of terrorism. However, there are other States that are clearly guilty of aiding and supporting terrorism and wilfully providing financial assistance and safe havens to terrorists. While we must enhance the capacities of the States that need it, the international community must also collectively call out those that aid terrorism and hold them accountable for their doublespeak.

Tenth, in our view, the Council should remain wary of attempts and schemes that distract attention from the fight against terrorism though hypothetical cause-and-effect linkages. The issue of climate change should be addressed holistically, in accordance with the provisions and principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We reiterate that no artificial links should be drawn between climate change and security-related issues without a firm scientific basis.

India has been contributing proactively to enhancing the capacities of African States to combat terrorism. Since 2018, India contributed more than $1.5 million to programmes in the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism targeting the capacity-building of countries in East and Southern Africa. Moreover, as India's Minister for External Affairs announced at the special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee held in New Delhi, this year we have contributed $500,000 to further strengthen those efforts. India has a robust security partnership with several countries in Africa aimed at building the capacities of security forces, including for countering terrorism. We are committed to strengthening every effort of our African friends, together with the international community, to fight terrorism, in order to ensure that we are not found wanting in that regard.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome your presence, Sir, in the seat of the President of the Security Council and thank Ghana for its commendable leadership on this important issue. We also thank Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, as well as Ms. Benedikta von Seherr-Thoss and Ms. Comfort Ero, for their briefings.

We suggest that the Security Council consider the current urgent problem of the growing terrorist threat in Africa through a specific historical perspective. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, Al-Qaida and their branches and affiliated terrorist groups feel at ease on the continent and their influence has only strengthened over time. What led to the spread of terrorist activity in Africa? The fact is that over and over again in the States of Africa and the neighbouring Middle East we have seen external interference create chaos and provoke instability. Foreign interventions weaken and destroy State institutions, as they have done in Iraq, Syria and Libya, creating a breeding ground for terrorists, helping criminals to profit and take advantage of countries' artificially created socioeconomic distress in order to recruit new adherents into their ranks.

It is essential to effectively counter the financing of terrorism, and that primarily involves addressing the links between criminal and terrorist groups. Establishing channels of communication with transnational organized crime is a hugely important

way for terrorists to obtain financial, material and technical support. Africa continues to face the problem of terrorist activities that are financed through the illicit trafficking of natural resources and drugs, the smuggling of cultural treasures and arms trafficking. If Africa was previously plundered by colonial Powers, today they have been replaced by big Western corporations. And terrorists and organized criminals, who plunder national wealth and siphon off natural and other resources, fit neatly into that landscape.

I would like to elaborate on the problem of weapons. We regularly sound the alarm over violations of arms embargoes against terrorist organizations in various regions of the world, including on the African continent. However, those violations do not stop, and information about the sources of support for terrorists is often concealed.

The situation on the African continent clearly requires prompt decisions, including from the United Nations. In that regard, the central and coordinating role of the world Organization and respect for the primary role of affected States in combating terrorism, as well as the consideration of their national particularities and priorities, are of paramount importance. We would like to emphasize that the requisite counter-terrorism mechanisms in the United Nations system, particularly within the Security Council, have already been established. States have specific obligations with regard to combating terrorism, which, if strictly observed, will achieve the desired result. The only issues are effective cooperation and rejecting double standards. In that context, we do not believe that it would be productive to impose additional counter-terrorism obligations on United Nations missions in Africa. Such an expansion of their mandates is not in line with the specific nature of the United Nations presence and diverts valuable resources from other necessary United Nations assistance.

We are convinced that an effective response to terrorists requires coordinated national and regional efforts. We welcome the measures being taken by African countries to develop coordinated approaches to counter-terrorism, including in the context of subregional organizations.

It is important to remember that there is a mechanism in place for reviewing the implementation of Security Council counter-terrorism resolutions by States. That is done by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. Based on the results, appropriate recommendations are developed for each State. If there are difficulties regarding their implementation, States can request technical assistance from the United Nations. It is important that such assistance not be formulaic, but that it fully take into account national priorities and country specifics.

In that regard, we support strengthening cooperation and coordination between the entities of the Secretariat and regional organizations in the fight against terrorism. In that context, a special role is played by the Office of Counter-Terrorism, which develops and implements various programmes and projects, provides technical assistance to States in countering terrorism, acts as the counter-terrorism coordinator for all United Nations agencies and collaborates with other relevant regional and international partners in that area.

In conclusion, I would like to say that some speakers today seem concerned about the achievements of Russian private military companies on the African continent. I want to tell them that African countries have every right to choose with whom and under what conditions they cooperate. They can work with various actors in the private-military-services market and generally pursue an independent policy in that area. It is the failures of Western countries that cause African States to turn to those that can make a real contribution to countering terrorism on the continent. We all remember that, against the backdrop of Operations Serval and Barkhan, allegedly aimed at combating terrorism, the terrorist threat in West Africa and the Sahel only continued to increase.

Ms. Juul (Norway): Terrorism in Africa is part of a global threat, and counter-terrorism therefore deserves global support. We thank Ghana for organizing this important meeting, and we thank you, Mr. President, for presiding over today's debate. I also thank the briefers for their insights. Let me now turn to the questions that were posed to us in the concept note (see S/2022/822, annex).

The first question is: How can United Nations missions in Africa better support regional counter-terrorism efforts? As a starting point, United Nations missions are not set up to conduct counter-terrorism due to the geographical limitations in their mandates, troop- and police-contributing country restrictions and the risk of neutral Blue Helmets becoming too involved in local conflicts.

Counter-terrorism must primarily be a national responsibility. Yet the situation in the Sahel shows us that cooperation among nations is also key. We see United Nations missions — both peacekeeping and political — as complementary to national and regional counter-terrorism efforts. Working side by side with counter-terrorism operations, United Nations missions can greatly contribute to spheres of stability and the protection of civilians, including by supporting viable political solutions through the coordinated use of good offices. They can also provide capacity-building for governance, service delivery and human rights protection. The close and operational partnership between the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia proves that that is possible.

I now move on to the second question: In what ways can the United Nations support building resilience to curb terrorism and violent extremism? That was also the topic of last week's debate on resilience-building and sustainable peace (see S/PV.9181). As we affirmed then, military solutions alone can never be enough. To achieve sustainable peace, affected States must act holistically by both countering immediate terrorist threats and addressing the underlying conditions that cause radicalization and violent extremism. That requires integrating counter-terrorism efforts within a broader political strategy that is conflict-sensitive, pursues the Sustainable Development Goals and protects and promotes human rights.

National efforts can also be strengthened through close cooperation with civil-society, bilateral and multilateral partners. In that regard, consulting with women's organizations and ensuring women's participation are key. Preventive United Nations missions, such as the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, should therefore be further enabled, including to work with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact in pursuit of a whole-of-United Nations approach to supporting national counter-terrorism efforts.

Finally, I turn to the third question: Which sustainable funding mechanism can be leveraged against terrorism in the Sahel region and coastal West Africa? While a member of the Security Council, Norway has used its place at this table to back the Secretary-General's call for a United Nations support office for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. We have done that based on the conviction that regional operations with African Union (AU) mandates can supplement United Nations peacekeeping, especially in cross-border counter-terrorist responses. The Security Council should not shy away from serious discussions on predictable, sustainable and flexible funding for AU-led and regional operations. At the same time, it is necessary that any United Nations funding be matched by sufficient human rights due diligence and AU compliance frameworks, building on the good work already done within the AU over many years. On both funding and compliance, we have seen progress on the AU side, which should pave the way for new, serious discussions on United Nations support.

There is a need to think innovatively about how regional-led, AU-mandated peace operations can contribute to holistic solutions. We need to bring out the best of United Nations, AU and other regional initiatives. That is why Norway actively supports the high-level panel on security, development and governance in the Sahel, and we look forward to its proposals.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): I thank Ghana for convening this high-level meeting, and we welcome President Akufo-Addo to preside over it. I thank the Deputy Secretary-General and all the briefers for their valuable insights.

Despite our ongoing best efforts, particularly in the course of the past two decades, we must face the troubling evidence that terrorism remains a serious threat to international peace and security. Terrorist violence and their extremist ideology continue to spread, with devastating consequences for civilians, women and children.

In that respect, Africa has been particularly exposed to such consequences. It has experienced an influx of terrorist groups that seek to establish a presence in areas where States lack authority, including in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, north-eastern Nigeria, the Lake Chad basin, northern Mozambique, the Sahel and Somalia. Terrorist networks take advantage of the manifold social, economic, political circumstances and explore security and other vulnerabilities in order to spread their hateful activities and ideology.

Two of the three most dynamic Da'esh networks are based in Africa. Boko Haram continues to destabilize the Sahel, a region that is home to the world's fastest-growing and deadliest terrorist groups. Al-Shabaab maintains its presence and has spread its tentacles in

the Great Lakes region, incessantly threatening the civilian population. Cabo Delgado, in Mozambique, has caused the forced displacement of 84,000 people, including 32,978 children, in one month alone.

It is tragic that almost 50 per cent of global terrorist deaths happen in sub-Saharan Africa. That is a deeply troubling situation, and it requires a robust global, unified, coordinated and effective response to fight it and to eradicate it. It requires continued action as well as the means and resources to successfully implement initiatives designed to respond to underlying causes of violent extremism, such as climate change, underdevelopment, illiteracy, poverty and the absence of a strong an effective Government presence.

We must fight terrorism with all means available, including through the use of force. While we fully subscribe to the notion, without any reservation, that there can never be a justification for any act of terrorism, we believe that the eradication of that scourge will not be fully achieved by condemnation and military means alone. Cutting the terrorist hydra's heads alone will not be enough, and unleashing brutal force that disrespects the law risks harming more than healing.

To be successful, we will need to tackle the root causes that lead to extremism so that we can suppress what it feeds and, by doing so, focus to prevent the spread of extremist propaganda and ideologies. To that end, there is hardly a better alternative than strengthening the rule of law and institutions, ensuring legitimacy through fair elections, effectively protecting all human rights by all, building open and cohesive societies and ensuring a fair redistribution of resources in order to address staggering disparities and inequalities.

Promoting social cohesion and respect for other's values are important deterrents since, as we know, terrorists' strong desires for revenge through violence are often motivated by what is perceived as humiliation. We in Albania will not tire of promoting the approach by developing domestic policies based on respect for difference and religious harmony, and we will share our experience with neighbours and others beyond the region.

It is a known fact — democracies create the necessary environment and opportunity for discussion and change so that frustrations can be articulated peacefully. The emergence of domestic terrorism, which might have an international impact, is often linked to violations of human rights, a lack of legitimacy and the absence of the values of freedom and democracy. But economic hardship, poverty and other vulnerabilities play their role, further plunging large swaths of people into deeper poverty, including in Africa, rendering such people more vulnerable to extremist ideologies.

Albania condemns in the strongest terms any form of terrorist acts or ideologies, anywhere and by anyone, and lends its full support to international efforts to combat terrorism. For that, we need to deal with what feeds it and keeps it alive. We must find better ways to reduce inequality within and across countries. We must fully and strictly implement the "zero finance to terror" policy in order to cut the lifeline to terrorism. We must confront extremist ideologies — online and offline — and never legitimize terrorism in any form.

In conclusion, even though States' specific needs can differ and the nature of terrorism has evolved, we must be united in our common goal to tackle terrorism. Without a holistic approach, what is countered and suppressed in one place will end up popping up elsewhere, as we have seen.

We must therefore strengthen our engagement with African Member States, recognize their efforts to enhance African ownership of counter-terrorism initiatives and policies and ensure that counter-terrorism policies and strategies are implemented globally, in a coordinated manner and with a special emphasis on inclusivity.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes His Excellency President Akufo-Addo's initiative to hold this important meeting, and welcomes his presence in the Chamber to preside over this debate. We would like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed. Chairperson Faki Mahamat, Ms. Von Seherr-Thoss and Ms. Ero for their briefings.

Terrorism is one of the major threats facing Africa. It severely impacts the security and stability of African countries, taking a heavy toll on Africa's socioeconomic development. Helping Africa to combat terrorism is a matter that impacts world peace. It is also an important responsibility of the Security Council. In recent years, the Council has met many times to discuss and consider the issue of counter-terrorism in Africa. Some progress has been made on issues of concern to African countries; however, a lot of work remains to be done. The Security Council should respond to Africa's urgent needs as its own and further prioritize its attention and resources towards Africa in order to

help Africa address the most pressing challenges and their root causes, in terms of combating terrorism.

First, we should build a strong foundation to support African countries in enhancing their counter-terrorism capacity. It has been proven time and again in international counter-terrorism practice that only when the countries concerned have established professional, efficient and robust security teams can they create an effective deterrent against terrorist activities. The countries of Mali, Burkina Faso, the Niger, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique and Nigeria have long been at the forefront of fighting terrorism. The security sectors in those countries have made tremendous efforts and sacrifices. Their achievements in combating terrorism deserve full recognition. The experience they gained in building up their security capacities is worth summarizing and disseminating. The international community should address weaknesses in security capacity-building in African countries and scale up support in terms of funding, equipment, intelligence and logistical support.

When it comes to counter-terrorism cooperation with African countries, we must fully respect the sovereignty of the countries concerned and their right to carry out external security cooperation. No other political conditions should be attached. The arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council on the Sudan, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have had a negative impact on security capacity-building in those countries and should therefore be adjusted or lifted in a timely manner.

Secondly, we should support regional cooperation and build a solid, common-security defence line for regional countries. In recent years, terrorist organizations in Africa have shown a posture featuring cross-border linkages and multipoint outbreaks. The Southern African Development Community set up a mission to combat terrorism in northern Mozambique, with success. That shows once again that to combat terrorism it is necessary to uphold a common, integrated, cooperative and sustainable security vision and to coordinate regional forces to respond collectively. The international community should support the efforts of African regional organizations to strengthen border control and law-enforcement cooperation and forge synergy in regional counter-terrorism efforts.

The funding shortfall affects counter-terrorism cooperation in Africa. It is therefore important to address that challenge. The proposal of Secretary-General Guterres to provide financial support through the United Nations regular budget or peacekeeping assessment deserves careful study by the Security Council The Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel is actively carrying out counter-terrorism military operations, which have recently encountered some difficulties. China supports the African Union (AU) and the United Nations in undertaking a joint assessment on the Sahel and expects that it will produce practical and actionable recommendations to revitalize cooperation on counter-terrorism in the Sahel and in West Africa in general.

Thirdly, we should address both the symptoms and the root causes of terrorism. We cannot fully and completely eliminate the threats posed by terrorism by military and security means alone. We must focus on the reality on the ground in Africa, with a view to adopting a systematic governance approach that implements integrated measures. The Sahel and the Lake Chad region are highly representative. The local economy is comparatively underdeveloped, and the people there have difficulties in making a living. Terrorist forces take advantage of the situation by targeting poor and unemployed young people from underprivileged backgrounds for recruitment.

The international community should take measures to support Africa's development with a greater sense of urgency. The United Nations should listen to Africa and give greater priority to the development agenda in order to create an environment that will enable Africa's development. As a developing country itself, China shares the aspirations of African countries for development. Under the framework of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative, China is actively working with Africa to address the obstacles related to infrastructure, human resources, trade and investment and dedicating resources to poverty reduction, food security, public health and other areas where people's livelihoods are at stake, in order to help African countries eliminate the root causes of political instability and terrorism. I would like to inform the Council that beginning on 1 December, China will levy a zero tariff on 98 per cent of the items originating from nine least-developed countries in Africa, including Burkina Faso.

Fourthly, we should leverage the United Nations leadership role and deepen international cooperation on countering terrorism in Africa. The Counter-Terrorism

Committee, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism should use their respective strengths to promote the consolidation of the counter-terrorism legal framework at the international, regional and national levels, enhance information-sharing, provide targeted assistance to African countries in order to improve their legislative, judicial, and law-enforcement capacities and increase the effectiveness of preventive counter-terrorism actions.

African countries have certain expectations with regard to United Nations peacekeeping troops' support for counter-terrorism operations in the continent. The Secretariat should take that into serious consideration in order to present solutions that not only conform to the troops' peacekeeping mandates but also meet the needs of the African countries concerned.

China has always been a staunch supporter of counter-terrorism and the maintenance of stability in Africa and has contributed actively to that cause. We have fully delivered on the peace and security projects that were announced at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and have provided military grants to the AU and countries in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Guinea to promote project cooperation. Through the China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund, China has supported the establishment in Africa of counter-terrorism offices and regional offices for countering radicalization and preventing violent extremism on the continent, with a view to training large numbers of African law-enforcement and security personnel, as well as providing financial support for counter-terrorism capacity-building projects in Africa.

Going forward, China will continue to work with the international community in the implementation of the Global Security Initiative, proposed by President Xi Jinping as an opportunity to further support Africa in its fight against terrorism and make a greater contribution to its achievement of lasting peace and sustainable development.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Ghana for convening this important meeting, and I welcome your presence among us, Mr. President. I also welcome the participation of the Deputy Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the President of the International Crisis Group and the Managing Director for Common Security and Defence Policy and Crisis Response of the European External Action Service.

I would like to emphasize two critical needs — steadfast support for African initiatives and the unequivocal rejection of excesses committed in the name of the fight against terrorism.

First, the Security Council must strengthen its support for African initiatives. All regional efforts such as those of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique and the Accra Initiative are to be commended. But we know that such efforts are hampered by a structural lack of funding and equipment. The European Union, Africa's leading security partner, contributes more than 90 per cent of the African Union's budget dedicated to peace operations through the African Peace Facility of the European Union. The European Union has contributed more than €2.25 billion to the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia and ATMIS. It also supports African armed forces through Common Security and Defence Policy missions. But that is not enough. We need to engage the entire international community.

It is time to ensure sustainable and predictable financing for African peacekeeping operations, including through mandatory United Nations contributions or in the framework of an innovative mechanism that would combine United Nations with bilateral contributions. France welcomes the progress of the African Union Peace Fund. We encourage the members of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the African Union Commission to redouble their efforts so that they can arrive quickly at a common position on financing African Union-mandated operations. Once that step has been taken, France recommends that the Security Council resume discussions on the subject as soon as possible.

Regional solutions must go hand in hand with the strengthening of national armies. As we all know, France has long been committed to helping West African countries fight terrorism. France will continue to provide its full support to States in the region that request it, based on a partnership approach, while supporting the national strategies of the States concerned.

The fight against terrorism requires coordinated, comprehensive and resolute action that respects international law both in Africa and the rest of the world. As we know, the terrorist threat, far from declining, has continued to increase. In West Africa,

it is now affecting the northern reaches of the coastal States on the Gulf of Guinea and is a challenge that we must tackle in support of the African partners concerned. The spread of Al-Qaida and Da'esh terrorist activities is also affecting other countries throughout the African continent.

Given the brutal and indiscriminate nature of the threat, there is also a risk of falling into the trap of resorting to an equally brutal and indiscriminate response. That is the approach proposed by certain private military companies, whose counter-terrorist response is totally counterproductive. Their exactions and plundering of natural resources serve only to maintain a dangerous spiral of violence by pitting one community against another. France welcomes the African Union's readiness to adopt a robust framework for all its operations aimed at compliance with human rights and United Nations principles. We are proud that the European Union is funding those efforts.

The goal of terrorists is to impose their ideologies on the African people and African States through force and deadly action. In addition to the fight we are waging on the ground against terrorism, we must make societies more resilient and deal with the socioeconomic factors underlying insecurity by addressing climate change and education and supporting civil-society organizations that work for the participation of women and young people and the defence of human rights.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I thank you, Sir, for convening us today, which is consistent with your personal leadership on security, including the creation of the Accra Initiative, with the robust defence by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) of democratic values in the region. Moreover, you have joined us this morning from the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a reminder that climate is a threat multiplier and another challenge to peace and security in Africa and around the world. I would like to join others in thanking the Deputy Secretary-General and our briefers today. And I would like to make three points to contribute to today's discussion.

First, we welcome and endorse the calls we have heard today for a holistic response to terrorism, an integrated approach to tackling the conditions that give rise to terrorism while protecting those at most risk. We welcome the Accra Initiative's work to address the security situation and strengthen cooperation on

regional security and intelligence. The United Kingdom is working with the Ghanaian Government to consider how best to support the Accra Initiative. Besides our efforts to limit the spread of violence, including terrorism, we are working with journalists to promote moderate voices. We are supporting communities in managing land more effectively and withstanding the challenges of climate shocks in regions threatened by violent extremist groups. We also want to emphasize that we cannot ignore the destabilizing role the Wagner Group is playing in the region. It is a driver of conflict and an exploiter of natural resources wherever it operates. Whatever the question, Wagner is not the answer.

Secondly, in the fight against terrorism, it is counterproductive to violate human rights and international law. The Council has consistently stressed that the fight against terrorism has to abide by international human rights and humanitarian law. In our experience, putting respect for human rights at the centre of counter-terrorism campaigns, and in close cooperation with civil society, will bolster their effectiveness, counter radicalization and build resilient communities. And that fight will be successful only with the meaningful participation of women, who in many cases are disproportionately affected by terrorism.

Thirdly, terrorism and violent extremism are transnational problems that require a coordinated international response. We have heard a lot this morning about the important role of the Accra Initiative, ECOWAS, the African Union and many other regional organizations. And I want to join others in emphasizing the importance of the United Nations system — not just the Office of Counter-Terrorism, but also in implementing the mandates that are agreed by the Council, including the provisions on United Nations human rights monitoring.

Like others, we look forward to the New Agenda for Peace as an important contribution to addressing the triple challenge that terrorism poses to peace, security and development.

Mr. Mythen (Ireland): I thank you, Mr. President, for your presence at this meeting today and for your leadership. And I thank the Ghanaian presidency for organizing this important briefing. I also want to thank Deputy Secretary-General Mohammed, His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Ms. Von Seherr-Thoss and Ms. Ero for their briefings.

Less than two weeks ago, Al-Shabaab detonated two car bombs in Mogadishu, killing more than 100 people and injuring many others. Lives in Africa are once again being shattered by the blight of terrorism. But that terrorist attack was not an isolated one. Regrettably, those attacks are an all-too-common occurrence across the African continent, particularly in the Sahel and Western Africa, where violence is now expanding into coastal States. Other regions have also been blighted by terrorism, including the Horn of Africa, the Lake Chad basin and Mozambique. Last year, Africa accounted for nearly half of all global terrorism-related deaths, with groups such as the Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin, Boko Haram and the Islamic State-West Africa Province leaving a trail of death and destruction in their wake.

The Council's response to acts of terror takes a familiar approach. We issue words of condemnation, condolence and solidarity. And words matter, but they are not enough. The key to tackling the terrorist threat in Africa is addressing the underlying drivers of terrorism and violent extremism. We know that communities affected by conflict, poverty, inequality, poor governance and human rights violations and abuses are more vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment. Pressures on local communities are compounded by the global food security crisis. We also know that the climate crisis is an exacerbating factor in armed conflict. Terrorist organizations are exploiting those in vulnerable conditions for recruitment purposes.

Ireland's view is that overly militarized counter-terrorism efforts can be ineffective or even counter-productive in the long term. Comprehensive responses look beyond security measures alone. The Council's efforts must therefore address the drivers of terrorism and violent extremism in a more holistic manner, as part of a One United Nations approach. We must work closely with the African Union (AU), African subregional organizations and African Member States. In that regard, Ireland welcomes the work of the Independent High-level Panel on Security and Development in the Sahel. We hope that the Panel's findings and recommendations can pave the way for long-awaited progress on strengthening international coordination to address the crisis in the region. We also recognize the need for predictable and sustainable financing for United Nations-authorized, AU-led peace support operations. We anticipate that the Secretary-General's upcoming report on the issue will prompt an open and frank discussion, as well as providing a window of opportunity to make real, concrete progress.

For Ireland, human rights must remain at the core of counter-terrorism responses. Human rights violations committed in the context of counter-terrorism operations drive radicalization and feed terrorist narratives. Counter-terrorism measures must always comply with international law, particularly international human rights law. Effective counter-terrorism responses also demand whole-of-society, gender-responsive approaches. That requires the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and the inclusion of young people, as well as engagement with civil society.

Terrorism not only helps to create humanitarian crises, but it also undermines humanitarian activity and endangers humanitarian actors. Council-mandated measures to counter terrorism, including sanctions, are therefore crucial to deterring and addressing terrorist threats. However, those tools can also have unintended negative humanitarian effects. To address that issue, Ireland, together with our United States colleagues, has introduced a draft resolution providing for a humanitarian exemption across all sanctions regimes. We urge all Council members to support that initiative, thereby allowing aid to reach populations at risk.

In conclusion, the Council must do more to prevent and counter the terrorist threat in Africa. Failure to do so would risk eroding many of the hard-won development gains achieved over the past three decades in the region. And failure is simply not an option.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.