



Security Council

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Letter dated 31 March 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the assessment of the work of the Security Council for the month of January 2020, during the presidency of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (see annex).

The assessment was prepared under my responsibility, following consultations with other members of the Council.

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

(Signed) **Dang Dinh Quy**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 31 March 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Viet Nam (January 2020)

Introduction

Under the presidency of Viet Nam in January 2020, the Security Council held 14 public meetings (consisting of 2 open debates, 4 adoptions and 8 briefings), 1 closed meeting and 12 consultations of the whole. The Council adopted four resolutions, issued one presidential statement and five press statements and issued elements for the press on three occasions. In addition, one Arria-formula meeting and two informal interactive dialogues were held.

Africa

Central African Republic

On 31 January, the Council adopted resolution [2507 \(2020\)](#), in which it renewed the mandate of the Central African Republic sanctions regime until 31 July 2020 by a vote of 13 in favour, none against and 2 abstentions. It also decided to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 31 August. The resolution further eased the arms embargo for unarmed ground military vehicles and ground military vehicles mounted with weapons with a calibre of 14.5 mm or less. Some members of the Council discussed the possibility of further easing the arms embargo related to the Central African Republic.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 14 January, the Council held an informal interactive dialogue on the Democratic Republic of the Congo to follow up on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in December 2019 and discuss how to work together to promote peace in the eastern part of that country under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region of 2013. The participants included the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries of the region, namely Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. The participants heard briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO, Leila Zerrougui, and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Huang Xia. While welcoming the recent progress of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in promoting cooperation and diplomacy in the region, Council members expressed particular concern about threats posed by armed groups, the illicit exploitation of and trade in natural resources and Ebola virus disease, among others. They stressed the importance of fully implementing the Framework and promoting regional and international cooperation to support the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Countries of the region also welcomed the progress made by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the support of MONUSCO. They stressed the importance of regional cooperation to support the settlement of the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In consultations held on 20 January, under the agenda item entitled “Other matters”, Council members heard a briefing by Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto

dos Santos Cruz after the release of his independent assessment report on the protection of civilians and neutralization of armed groups in Beni and Mambasa territories in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and exchanged views on the operation of MONUSCO after the renewal of its mandate.

Libya

In consultations held on 6 January, the Council heard briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Ghassan Salamé, on the recent developments in Libya and the preparations for the Berlin Conference on Libya. Members of the Council exchanged their views on the situation. Press elements were delivered after the consultations, in which members of the Council expressed their concern about the escalation over the days preceding the consultations, reiterated the need to comply with the arms embargo and to cease foreign interference and reaffirmed their support for the Secretary-General, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and other international efforts in support of the United Nations to find a political solution to the situation in Libya.

In consultations held on 21 January, the Council received a briefing by the Secretary-General on the outcome of the Berlin Conference on Libya, which was held in 19 January. Elements of the press were delivered after the consultations, in which the Council Members welcomed the conclusions of the Conference, reiterated their support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in bringing about a lasting ceasefire and a Libyan-owned and Libyan-led political solution in Libya and urged the Libyan parties to engage constructively to conclude a ceasefire agreement.

In consultations held on 28 January, under the agenda item entitled “Other matters”, the Council discussed the follow-up to the outcome of the Berlin Conference.

On 30 January, the Council held a briefing during which it heard a briefing from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNSMIL on the recent developments in Libya and the work of UNSMIL. The Council also heard a briefing by Mathias Licharz, speaking on behalf of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011). The Special Representative expressed concern that violence continued notwithstanding the recent truce, while the arms embargo was violated on a regular basis. He urged the Council to soon adopt a resolution to support the implementation of the conclusions of the Berlin Conference on Libya. Members of the Council called for the achievement of a lasting ceasefire and for upholding the arms embargo in order to put an end to the conflict. The Permanent Representative of Libya highlighted the sufferings and frustration that the people of Libya endured and called upon the Council to adopt a resolution that could support the outcome of the Berlin Conference.

After the briefing, the Council held consultations with the participation of Mr. Salamé to continue its discussion of the item. Council members continued to affirm their support for Mr. Salamé and addressed questions to him on issues related to the upholding of the arms embargo and monitoring of a possible ceasefire in the future.

Mali

On 15 January, the Council held a briefing on the situation in Mali, followed by closed consultations. The Council also heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix. In addition, Tiébilé Dramé, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, made a statement. In a press statement on 17 January, the Council called upon the parties to show

increased political will to urgently accelerate the implementation of the 2015 Algiers Agreement in order to meet, by the end of the Mission's current mandate, the priority measures of resolution [2480 \(2019\)](#). They strongly condemned the terrorist attack perpetrated on 9 January against a MINUSMA camp in Tessalit. Members of the Council expressed their concern over anti-MINUSMA sentiment in Mali. They also welcomed the Pau Summit of 13 January, in which a "Coalition for the Sahel", aimed at fighting terrorism, strengthening the Sahelian States' military capabilities, was proposed. In consultations after the briefing, Council members expressed grave concern about civilian casualties, including those of women and children, supported a national inclusive dialogue process in Mali and discussed the need to reorganize the operational forces of MINUSMA more effectively.

South Sudan

On 23 January, the Council held an informal interactive dialogue to discuss recent developments relating to the implementation of the 2018 Revitalized Peace Agreement in South Sudan. The Council also heard a briefing by the Special Envoy of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ismail Wais, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), David Shearer. The briefers updated Council members on the progress made by the parties in South Sudan in implementing the 2018 Revitalized Peace Agreement, in particular efforts to establish a transitional government. Council members and the briefers urged the parties in South Sudan to establish the transitional government by the deadline of 22 February 2020. Members of IGAD, namely Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and Uganda, were invited to exchange views on the matter and took the floor. The representative of South Sudan reaffirmed the efforts of the Government of South Sudan and the commitment in forming the transitional government.

Sudan

In consultations held on 8 January, under the agenda item entitled "Other matters", the Council heard a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Bintou Keita, on recent developments in Western Darfur, including attacks on a camp for internally displaced persons and the looting of the former headquarters of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Press elements were delivered after the consultations, in which members of the Council condemned the recent intercommunal violence in El Geneina, West Darfur, underlined their continuous support for the work of the Government of the Sudan and commended the efforts of the Prime Minister of that country, Abdalla Hamdok.

Sudan/South Sudan (Abyei)

On 29 January, the Council issued a press statement in which members of the Council condemned the recent violence in the Kolom area of Abyei, resulting in the death of approximately 30 civilians, including children. Members of the Council called for the immediate cessation of violence against civilians and called upon the Government of the Sudan and that of South Sudan to coordinate an investigation without delay with the assistance of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

West Africa and the Sahel

On 8 January, at a biannual briefing followed by closed consultations, the Council received briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, on the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) ([S/2019/1005](#)).

Council members expressed concern about the spread of terrorism and organized crimes in the region. They strongly condemned attacks against civilians, security and defence forces, as well as peacekeepers, stressing that intercommunal and sectarian violence was jeopardizing regional development and required development-focused political and security approaches to tackle poverty, unemployment and other underlying causes of instability. Some Council members agreed that the Multinational Joint Task Force and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) required more international support. Many Council members also stressed the need for the peaceful holding of upcoming presidential elections in six West African countries, namely Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, the Niger and Togo, as some tensions were foreseen. On 31 January, Council members agreed to renew the mandate of UNOWAS for additional period of three years through a letter of the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General. The fulfilment of the mandate of UNOWAS will be updated to the Council members at the six-monthly report by the Secretary-General.

Asia

India-Pakistan Question

In consultations held on 15 January, under the agenda item "Other matters", the Council discussed the situation under the agenda item "The India-Pakistan question". The Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Mohamed Khaled Khiari, and the Chief of Staff of the Office of Military Affairs, Brigadier General El Hadji Babacar Faye, delivered briefings to members of the Council on the developments in Jammu and Kashmir since August 2019 and the work of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). Members of the Council exchanged views on the situation.

United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia

On 22 January, the Council held its six-monthly consultations on the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. It heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the Regional Centre, Natalia Gherman, who provided an update on its activities in facilitating preventive diplomacy in Central Asia, in particular the implementation of the Joint Plan of Action of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia, cooperation among the five Central Asian States and Afghanistan in counter-terrorism, as well as the initiatives of the Centre on transboundary-water management, combating drug trafficking and the role of women and young people. Council members welcomed the efforts of the Regional Centre in promoting peace, security and development in Central Asia and expressed their continuing support for the work of the Regional Centre and that of the Special Representative.

Middle East

Syrian Arab Republic

In consultations held on 3 January, the Council heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, on the security and humanitarian situation in the north-western part of the Syrian Arab Republic, including Idlib. Ms. DiCarlo delivered a briefing to the Council on recent escalation of hostilities on the ground, called for further efforts by parties concerned to exercise self-restraint, implement the ceasefire agreement on Idlib, facilitate the humanitarian operations, and ensure the protection of civilians. She also emphasized the need to promote a comprehensive political process, including by engaging

constructively in the work of the Syrian Constitutional Committee. Mr. Lowcock recalled the statement by the Secretary-General delivered on 23 December 2019, in which he emphasized the serious humanitarian consequences to civilians caused by the ongoing attacks and stressed the increased vulnerability, owing to the harsh winter conditions, of those who had been displaced. Members of the Council then exchanged views on and explored ways forward to solve the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, including political, humanitarian and counter-terrorism issues.

On 6 January, the Council held consultations on the implementation of resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#) under the item “The situation in the Middle East”. The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, delivered a briefed briefing to members of the Council on the seventy-fifth report of the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on its work in the Syrian Arab Republic. She noted that the Declaration Assessment Team was planning for the twenty-third round of consultations, the OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic was analysing the information collected from its deployment in December 2019, the Investigation and Identification Team was conducting its investigations and these mechanisms would have updates and reports in due course. Members of the Council condemned the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances and for any reason.

On 10 January, the Council adopted resolution [2504 \(2020\)](#) by a vote of 11 in favour, none against and 4 abstaining, by which it extended for six months, until 10 July 2020, the authorization for the United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners to deliver humanitarian aid across borders into the Syrian Arab Republic through Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa crossings. The Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic also made a statement.

On the morning of 29 January, at a briefing, the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Under-Secretary-General expressed alarm over the worsening humanitarian situation in the north-west portion of the Syrian Arab Republic, as hostilities had escalated in the prior weeks, and warned of further deterioration in the Syrian economy. According to the Under-Secretary-General, the fighting in and around Idlib Governorate remained intense. He stressed the importance of the humanitarian efforts of the United Nations and its partners and expressed concern about the continued obstruction to humanitarian work. Members of the Council echoed the concerns of the Under-Secretary-General about the serious humanitarian situation in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic. They urged the parties concerned to respect the ceasefire in Idlib; fulfil the obligations under international law to protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian work; and make a greater effort to promote a political process based on resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#). Some members stressed the importance of counter-terrorism in Idlib while also emphasizing the need to uphold international law in efforts to combat terrorism in general. Some members of the Council expressed their appreciation for United Nations humanitarian agencies.

On the afternoon of 29 January, the Council held a briefing on the political process in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Khawla Matar, noted that the Special Envoy, Geir Pedersen, was in Damascus to continue to engage with the Syrian parties and key international stakeholders to unlock progress on the path out of the Syrian conflict and towards the implementation of resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#). She reiterated that the Syrian Constitutional Committee was part of that effort and all parties had been working to narrow down differences in order for the Committee to reconvene soon. Council members expressed their concerns about the slow progress of the political process,

while violence in the north-west of the country continued. They stressed that all parties must comply with and strictly implement their obligations under resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#) and other related resolutions. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and other parties were urged to build on recent progress to engage in dialogue and negotiations with the broad participation of relevant parties to find a long-lasting political solution acceptable to the Syrian people.

Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 21 January, at the quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ursula Mueller. Ms. DiCarlo, citing a deadlocked political process and illegal settlement expansion, emphasized that negative trends continued to undermine prospects for a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She informed the Council of a recent survey in which it was found that 65 per cent of Israelis thought that the conflict would never end and 52 per cent of Palestinians held the same view. She described the threat of annexation of the Jordan Valley and parts of the West Bank. According to Ms. Mueller, half the population in the West Bank and Gaza had needed aid in 2020, while operating space for humanitarian efforts was constrained by both Israeli and Palestinian authorities. She encouraged Member States to increase humanitarian-development collaboration in order to reduce Palestinian reliance on aid.

Most of the speakers called upon the parties concerned to exercise restraint and refrain from actions that might escalate tensions, reiterated their support for a two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, expressed their concern about continued settlement activities and plans to annex parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and urged the resumption of dialogue and negotiation based on relevant United Nations resolutions and international law. Many voiced their alarm regarding the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and expressed their appreciation for the work of UNRWA. Several speakers underlined the need for Palestinian reconciliation. The situation in Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen was mentioned in some statements at the open debate.

Yemen

On 13 January, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2505 \(2020\)](#), by which it decided to renew the mandate of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) for six months, until 15 July 2020, continuing to oversee a peace agreement between the Government of Yemen and the Houthi militia in the port city of Hudaydah. The Council also requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council every month on progress made in implementing the agreement and to provide a review of UNMHA at least one month before its mandate was due to expire.

On 16 January, the Council held a briefing on the situation in Yemen, at which it heard from the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, and the Director of the Coordination Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ramesh Rajasingha. Mr. Griffiths, citing a range of achievements since he had last delivered a briefed briefing to the Council, said that de-escalation commitments were holding with no major acts of military provocation in Yemen, the frequency of air strikes had dramatically dropped and fuel shipments were arriving in Hudaydah ports. He stated, however, that there remained concerns about dire humanitarian needs, including the need to ensure safe humanitarian access to reach millions of persons requiring urgent assistance. Mr. Rajasingha elaborated

on the situation on the ground, which was less dangerous for civilians than one year earlier, but remained pockmarked by violence resulting in mass casualties, urged the parties concerned to uphold their international humanitarian law obligations and swiftly move towards a nationwide ceasefire.

He also reported on the increasing restrictions on the aid operation in the north of Yemen. Members of the Council recognized the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the World Food Programme (WFP) to reach those most in need. They also commended the positive trend of de-escalation throughout the country and urged parties to continue on that path in order to revive the political process. The majority of the Council reiterated its support for the renewal of UNMHA, but noted a lack of steps taken towards the implementation of the accord.

After the briefing, the Council held informal consultations to continue its discussion on the item, during which the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen addressed the questions raised by some members of the Council related to the next steps after the de-escalation, developments in the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and the Riyadh Agreement, impediments to United Nations humanitarian work, the implementation of UNMHA mandate and the participation of Yemeni women in the political process.

On 28 January, the Council held consultations with and heard a briefing by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen. He said that the situation in Yemen in the days prior to the consultations had changed considerably and was at the time alarming, with renewed military strikes in East Sanaa and Marib, causing more than 100 casualties. The developments might undermine recent progress, including with regard to the peace process, he said. On 30 January, following the consultations, the Council issued a press statement expressing serious concern with regard to the significant escalation of violence in Nehm and Al Jawf and its impact on civilians, calling for an immediate cessation of the hostilities, which posed a threat to the political process, and for a return to de-escalation efforts. The members of the Council also reiterated their full support for the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and expressed hope that a renewed de-escalation would create space for the Yemeni parties to move urgently towards comprehensive and inclusive United Nations-led negotiations on the security and political arrangements necessary to end the conflict and move towards a peaceful transition. They reiterated their call upon the parties to maintain the ceasefire in Hudaydah and continue broader implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. They welcomed the renewed commitment of the parties on 9 January to implementing the Riyadh Agreement.

Europe

Cyprus

On 16 January, the Council held a closed meeting related to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) with the troop- and police-contributing countries. The participants heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNFICYP, Elizabeth Spehar.

In consultations held on 20 January, the Council heard a briefing by Ms. Spehar on a report of the Secretary-General on recent developments in Cyprus ([S/2020/23](#)). In the report, the Secretary-General asked the parties concerned to avoid further escalation and to defuse tensions in Cyprus. He also expressed his concern about incidents of violations in the buffer zone and continuing disregard towards the mandated authority of UNFICYP and urged the parties to work constructively with UNFICYP to address the situation. Many members of the Council expressed their agreement with the observations of the Secretary-General and underlined the importance of the parties showing stronger political will, engaging more actively in

political dialogue and respecting relevant Council resolutions. Members of the Council expressed their support for the work of UNFICYP and the extension of its mandate.

On 30 January, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2506 \(2020\)](#), by which it decided to renew the mandate of UNFICYP for six months, until 31 July 2020. The Council expressed its serious concern regarding an increase in the number of violations of the military status quo along the ceasefire lines and called once more upon the sides and all parties involved to respect the mandated authority of UNFICYP. Council members called upon the leaders of the two Cypriot communities and all parties involved to refrain from any actions and rhetoric that might damage the chances of successful negotiations. Council members called upon the leaders of the two sides to work expeditiously on reaching convergence on core issues. They also requested the Secretary-General to submit by 10 July 2020 a report on his good offices, in particular progress towards reaching a consensus starting point for meaningful, results-oriented negotiations leading to a settlement.

Americas

Colombia

On 13 January, the Council held a briefing and heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, on recent developments in Colombia, including local and departmental elections held on 27 October 2019. Mr. Massieu noted a recent wave of popular protests, as well as concerns regarding security guarantees for the former members of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), and of communities and social leaders across the country, in which Colombians called for the full implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace.

In his report on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia ([S/2019/988](#)), while acknowledging continuing progress, the Secretary-General noted the uneven implementation of various reintegration-related aspects of the Final Agreement. He welcomed progress made by the Government and FARC-EP after the laying down of weapons in jointly elaborating a reintegration road map. The adoption of the road map by the Government and the political party Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) would help to provide greater clarity on matters, including education, health, the sustainability of economic reintegration, housing, community-based reintegration and psychosocial assistance. In the report, the Secretary-General underscored the interconnected nature of the provisions of the Final Agreement and the importance of making progress simultaneously in areas such as the rural reforms designed to combat poverty and underdevelopment in the countryside; in the crop substitution efforts to counter illegal economies; and in the political reforms aimed at more inclusive and participatory politics.

On 15 January, the Council issued a press statement in which it reiterated its full and unanimous support for the peace process in Colombia. The Council welcomed both parties' continued commitment to the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace as it entered its fourth year, as well as the inclusive and comparatively peaceful local and departmental elections held in October 2019 with the participation of FARC. It also welcomed the most recent expression of support from the President of Colombia, Iván Duque Márquez, for the continued and ongoing work of the Verification Mission. Members of the Council expressed their concern about reports of grave security conditions in several areas of Colombia and continued threats, attacks and killings targeting community and social leaders. They called for those responsible to be brought to

justice and for effective action to improve security, including through the extension of an integrated civilian and state security presence to conflict-affected areas. The Council noted the potential opportunity presented by national dialogue stemming from recent protests to engage diverse sectors, including women's organizations, indigenous and Afro-Colombian groups, environmental groups and young people, on building consensus on the implementation of the Final Agreement.

Haiti

On 8 January, the Council issued a press statement in which it expressed its concern about the ongoing political impasse in Haiti. Members of the Council reiterated the immediate necessity for the country's stakeholders to engage in an inclusive and open dialogue to form a Government that could respond to the needs of the Haitian people without further delay. Members of the Council emphasized the urgent need to address deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Haiti through coordinated action by the Government of Haiti, the United Nations and the international community and reiterated their commitment to working with Haiti towards a democratic, peaceful and secure future.

Thematic issues and other matters

Maintenance of international peace and security

On 9, 10 and 13 January, the Council held a ministerial-level open debate on the theme "Upholding the United Nations Charter" under the agenda item "Maintenance of international peace and security", presided by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, Pham Binh Minh. The Secretary-General and the Chair of the Elders, Mary Robinson, spoke at the debate. At the beginning of the debate, the Council adopted a statement by the President of the Security Council ([S/PRST/2020/1](#)) in which the Council reaffirmed its commitment to the Charter of the United Nations in its entirety, including the purposes and principles thereof, and an international order based on international law as the indispensable foundation of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. The Council also reaffirmed its commitment to multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations, encouraged the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to assist Member States and regional organizations in upholding the Charter and stressed its determination to uphold the Charter in all its activities.

In his statement, the Secretary-General emphasized that the most effective way for Member States to face global challenges collectively was to strengthen their commitment to the Charter. The Chair of the Elders stressed that the world was facing two distinct existing threats – nuclear proliferation and the climate crisis – and responding to them was made even harder at a time when multilateral cooperation was being undermined by populism and nationalism.

In the ensuing debate, representatives reaffirmed their commitment to the Charter, international law and multilateralism. It was emphasized that, with the United Nations marking its seventy-fifth anniversary in 2020, given the multifaceted impact of recent developments in the geopolitical environment on countries, it was high time that the Member States acted faithfully in accordance with the provisions of the Charter; fully utilized the tools that the Charter provided; and considered strengthening the three pillars of the United Nations, reforming the United Nations and the Council and making more frequent use of the peaceful settlement of disputes and regional arrangements. At the conclusion of the debate, 111 speakers had delivered statements.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

On 30 January, the Council convened a briefing on cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in maintaining international peace and security. The Council heard briefings by the Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of ASEAN, Lim Jock Hoi, on cooperation between the United Nations and ASEAN. Highlighting the importance of strong partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations, the Secretary-General emphasized the key role of ASEAN in the structure of regional peace and security and its contribution to promoting dialogue and engagement through ASEAN-led forums. He proposed various areas for strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and ASEAN, including peacekeeping, the women and peace and security agenda, the youth and peace and security agenda, border management, early warning arrangements and climate action. Mr. Lim Jock Hoi reaffirmed the commitment of ASEAN to multilateralism; stressed the importance of relations between ASEAN and its external partners, including the United Nations; reviewed the progress made in implementing the five-year Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the United Nations and the United Nations (2016–2020); and looked forward to the development of the next Plan of Action for the period 2021–2025 to sustain and further the momentum of cooperation between the two organizations. Members of the Council welcomed the efforts of ASEAN in confidence-building and preventive diplomacy and the organization’s meaningful participation in the work of the United Nations. They expressed their support for the active role of ASEAN in regional and global issues of common interest, as well as the strengthening of cooperation between the two organizations.
