



Security Council

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Provisional

President: Mr. Zhang Jun (China)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Estonia	Mr. Jürgenson
France	Mr. De Rivière
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Niger	Mr. Abarry
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. King
South Africa	Mr. Matjila
Tunisia	Mr. Ladeb
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Allen
United States of America	Mrs. Craft
Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Countering terrorism and extremism in Africa

Letter dated 26 February 2020 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2020/161)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Countering terrorism and extremism in Africa

Letter dated 26 February 2020 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2020/161)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Algeria, Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Japan, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Sudan and Togo to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, on behalf of Secretary-General António Guterres; Her Excellency Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, on behalf of Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, Assistant-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the United Nations Development Programme Administrator, on behalf of the Administrator.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite His Excellency Mr. Olof Skoog, Head of Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in the meeting.

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/2020/161, which contains a letter dated 26 February 2020 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: I commend the People's Republic of China for organizing this important meeting.

Today, Africa is moving forward with its own agenda of progress, peace and prosperity. Across the continent, countries are growing and addressing complex structural challenges, in line with the African Union Agenda 2063. Civil society, communities and Governments are working together as never before. The United Nations is fully committed to supporting those efforts and important progress has already been made in implementing the United Nations-African Union (AU) Joint Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, and the AU-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

However, the continent continues to face vulnerabilities that threaten its peace and security, hinder its economic development and undermine human rights and the rule of law. Among those threats is that of terrorism and violent extremism, which continues to grow in various parts of the continent, despite our efforts to prevent and counter it at the national, regional and international levels. Al-Shabaab continues to pose the most persistent threat to security in Somalia and East Africa, despite the intensified military operations against it in recent years. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Al-Qaida affiliates collaborate with each other to undertake increasingly sophisticated attacks in West Africa, especially in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger. ISIL also continues to operate in Libya, despite recent setbacks, and is restructuring and empowering its affiliates in Eastern, Southern and Central Africa.

In the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin, the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, Boko Haram and its splinter faction, the Islamic State West Africa Province, continue to terrorize local populations and attack security forces. I would like to take this opportunity to remember the tens of thousands of African victims of terrorism and to express my solidarity with the affected Governments and people. Terrorism causes deep lasting scars, and victims and survivors need not only protection but a chance to heal through justice and support for rebuilding their lives.

We know that women bear a disproportionate burden of that violence, including through sexual slavery. Just as misogyny is at the heart of so many

terrorist groups' strategies, so must women be at the centre of our responses.

The High-level Conference on Counter-Terrorism and the Prevention of Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism, which the United Nations co-organized with the Government of Kenya in Nairobi last July, has reinvigorated our common efforts to understand and address terrorism in Africa. As the Secretary-General has stated, we cannot address terrorism without addressing its underlying factors. The threat of terrorism is often a consequence of development, humanitarian, human rights and security challenges that terrorist groups seek to exploit. Security and military solutions are therefore not sufficient.

We must address poverty, weak governance, intercommunal tensions, gender inequality, youth unemployment, illicit activities, such as the trafficking in weapons and people, and the use of new technologies and social media to recruit, inflame and incite. We also need to better understand the specific threat and priority needs of each country and subregion. There is no one-size-fits-all solution; comprehensive and inclusive all-of-Government and all-of-society approaches are essential.

As terrorism has no borders, preventing and combating it requires strong multilateral cooperation. The United Nations remains committed to bringing Member States together to share counter-terrorism best practices, expertise and resources. The United Nations works closely with African organizations and Member States to promote a comprehensive and balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We supported the development of regional counter-terrorism strategies in the Sahel and Central and Southern Africa and we support the implementation of the strategy adopted by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development for the Horn of Africa and Tanzania.

Further to requests from Member States, we are supporting African-led and African-owned initiatives in priority thematic areas, including protecting vulnerable targets; countering terrorists' travel; developing coordination mechanisms for law enforcement; enhancing the capacity of Member States to investigate and prevent cyberattacks; engaging with parliamentarians to implement relevant counter-terrorism obligations and promoting South-South

cooperation and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of support for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), which can play a critical role in combating terrorism, especially in the three border areas of Mali, the Niger and Burkina Faso. The Pau summit in January, convened by President Emmanuel Macron, put forth an enhanced and focused strategy that could significantly reduce the terrorist threat. I reiterate the Secretary-General's call for the international community to provide strong support for the efforts of the G-5 Sahel.

Terrorism is an evolving and pervasive multidimensional threat. I encourage Member States and other partners to take advantage of the upcoming review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Week, to strengthen our efforts and partnerships.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Mohammed.

Ms. Mohammed: On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, I wish to start by congratulating your delegation, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and thank you for extending an invitation to a representative of the African Union (AU) to speak at today's timely and very important debate. You also have our support as we work to strengthen the partnership between China and Africa for the benefit of peace, security and stability on the continent. We congratulate your delegation on the successful conclusion of the negotiations of the presidential statement to be adopted later today.

Today's meeting is indeed taking place at a time when terrorism and violent extremism are assuming unprecedented scales of expansion and intensity within and beyond the African continent. In addition to the situations in the Sahel, the Lake Chad basin and the Horn of Africa, terrorism is now spreading to other parts of the continent previously spared by the menace. Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo elaborated on that fact in great detail.

We cannot ignore the fact that those regions are at war today — a real war in which dozens of soldiers and civilians die almost every week. Thousands of

children have seen their schools closed either because they are destroyed or because teachers and pupils alike have been forced to flee. Populations have lost their homes and livelihoods, while basic infrastructure has been devastated, reversing development gains and threatening prospects of any kind of future for the people of those regions for decades to come.

In the meantime, the tools employed by terrorist groups are becoming increasingly sophisticated. The double-edged sword of technology is a reality we have to grapple with as techniques become more sophisticated, as we have seen with the reality of drone terrorism. Terrorist groups have also perfected the art of recruitment, facilitated by the use of cyberplatforms and structural vulnerabilities, such as poverty, ethnic and religious fissures and competing political ideologies. Extremist and other criminal groups use social media and online recruitment platforms to spread radical propaganda to the general public in various languages.

We must also recognize that the sophistication of terrorist groups does not stop at their radicalization and recruitment strategies. Over the years, they have morphed into well-organized shadow Governments, providing services and in some cases acting as the judge, jury and executioner.

Terrorism is also fuelling intercommunal violence. We have seen in the past how terrorist groups have exploited tensions among communities in several countries.

The complexity of terrorism and violent extremism on the African continent defies generalizations and one-size-fits-all policy responses. The AU approaches have therefore evolved in response to such complexities. As early as 1992, the AU took steps to address terrorism through the adoption of resolutions and declarations on strengthening cooperation among its member States. In the late 1990s, the continent recognized the need for a robust multidimensional approach and therefore adopted the 1999 Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, which provides, among other things, measures to counter terrorist financing, strengthen the criminal justice response to terrorism and foster inter-State police and judicial cooperation.

In 2004, the Convention was supplemented by a Protocol, which addresses the convergence of terrorism and organized crime. That was done at a time when piracy and kidnap-for-ransom appeared as new means of securing funds for terrorist groups.

The AU institutions have also continued to build the capacities of intelligence services, law enforcement agencies and other institutions to prevent and combat terrorism, in line with the African Union instruments and frameworks. Those institutions include the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa and, most recently, the AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation. Furthermore, the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes for Enhancing Security Cooperation in the Sahel and East Africa regions, established under the auspices of the AU, have served as catalysts for cooperation among the intelligence services of the countries and regions concerned.

In addition to that, AU peace support operations, such as the African Union Mission in Somalia and ad-hoc security coalitions, such as the Multinational Joint Task Force and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, have demonstrated to the rest of the world the commitment of Africa to eliminate terrorism. The international community has therefore understood the urgent need to provide those mechanisms with the predictable and sustainable support that is commensurate with the challenges at hand. Against that background, I would like to emphasize three points, based on our experience in Africa.

First, as we manage this scourge, we have recognized more than ever that reinforcing our efforts to ensure the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism must be addressed in an integrated and comprehensive manner. There is a need to focus more on prevention, while integrating security and law-enforcement responses, as well as sustainable post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction.

Secondly, more work is needed to understand the motivation, particularly for young people, to join the ranks of violent extremist groups. The dominant and stereotypical explanation has been that they are unemployed and marginalized individuals who have succumbed to the appeal of charismatic fanatical leaders who provide opportunities otherwise unavailable to them. But research conducted on the continent indicates that that is not always the case. In fact, there is often a combination of factors, some of which are neither religious negotiations or ideological. That is not to say that ideology and religion do not play an important role in many instances. Nonetheless, there is a need for policy responses that are specifically designed to

address the local realities and the multiplicity of factors, whether economic, ethnic, political or religious.

Thirdly, concerning the international community as a whole, we need to pay more attention to the factors that lie beyond the immediate local context. From the conflict in the Middle East to the rise of Islamophobia and right-wing extremist groups in the West, these issues are craftily integrated into the narrative of violent extremist groups to portray a global injustice and instil fear and hatred. We should therefore be mindful of the fact that conditions that provide fertile ground for violent extremism have to be addressed both locally and globally.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the AU's commitment to fully assume its share of responsibility in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. However, we should also be mindful of the fact that the responsibility rests on all of us and that we need to act collectively to confront this scourge, which not only undermines international peace and security but also the very values and principles that have long characterized our diverse and democratic societies. All Member States must continuously seek to work together through approaches that do not cause harm, but rather reflect the principles that bind together our international community, with a sense of solidarity and responsibility for the immediate and long-term welfare of all societies across the globe.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. Mohammed for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Dieye.

Mr. Dieye: I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council today. I would like to highlight the need to prevent violent extremism through an approach grounded in sustainable development and human rights. I will highlight how the United Nations is using such an approach to successfully address violent extremism in Africa.

We stand ready to support you, Mr. President, in your efforts to support peace, prosperity and progress in Africa. Let me first state emphatically that development effort is yielding an economic renewal, peace and prosperity on the continent. Countries even in the Sahel are showing significant economic growth potential, with a projected 6 per cent in Burkina Faso and the Niger, 5.6 per cent in Chad, 3.6 per cent in Mauritania and 4.8 per cent in Mali. All countries in the region

have undertaken voluntary national reviews at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and are making progress to achieve many Sustainable Development Goals. Let us not forget the progress in Africa and the promise of Africa, and let us celebrate the development investments that underpin them.

Yet we see that the African continent is increasingly challenged by instability, especially in what is now referred to as the arc of instability spanning the Sahel, the Lake Chad region and the Horn of Africa, with epicentres in the Liptako-Gourma triangle, central Mali, the Lake Chad basin and Somalia. We in the international system are also challenged to address that instability, given our lack of empirical evidence. So often, we do not know with absolute certainty the specific needs of communities and institutions, the strategies that work to meet those needs or how we can invest to achieve measurable, sustained impact.

That is why the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) serves the system by investing in quality research and evidence-based programming to enable action. For example, our approach to preventing violent extremism is based on groundbreaking research that draws on interviews with more than 700 former members of violent extremist groups to understand the drivers of recruitment. Our 2017 study *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment* finds that 55 per cent of voluntary recruits express frustration over their economic condition; 83 per cent believe that their Government looks only after the interests of a few; more than 75 per cent have zero trust in politicians and law-enforcement institutions; many have a low level of education; and the majority of recruits come from borderlands or peripheral areas that have suffered generations of marginalization.

In those ungoverned and neglected spaces, which are hotspots of violence, communities experience a lack of access to services, such as education, health care, justice, security, livelihoods, the opportunity to influence the decisions that affect their lives and the opportunities they need to thrive. Those are the challenges that underpin violent extremism.

In addition, our 2019 report *Invisible Women: Gendered Dimensions of Return, Rehabilitation and Reintegration* finds that many violent extremist groups in Africa have co-opted the message of women's empowerment and improved socioeconomic conditions.

Many women who voluntarily join are attracted by that message. If these root causes of violent extremism are not addressed, the risk of the continued recruitment of women, including the re-recruitment of many thousands of female returnees, will continue.

Allow me to reiterate the primacy of prevention in addressing those root causes of violent extremism. Investing in prevention is good economics. A report jointly published by the United Nations and the World Bank shows that every \$1 invested in prevention reduces the cost of conflict by over \$16 in the long run. Investing in prevention protects a State against a loss of 2 to 8 per cent of gross domestic product per year. And yet the majority of funding is not allocated to prevention and peacebuilding, but to crisis response. According to a 2018 report issued by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, only 2 per cent of the total official development assistance to fragile countries went to prevention, and only 10 per cent to peacebuilding.

Investment also tends to overly focus on securitized approaches, even though we know that such approaches carry a risk of increased violent extremism. Our research demonstrates that the trigger for 71 per cent of people who join violent extremist groups is their experience of law enforcement committing human rights abuses.

A purely securitized approach to violent extremism ignores the evidence about what must be done to effectively address that challenge. We know that development solutions are needed to address the proven root causes of violent extremism, and we know that they are effective. We have data to show that dialogue supports significant attitude and behaviour change among people from different political, religious and social groups. We have empirically demonstrated that projects integrating psychosocial support, skills training and education reduce extremist tendencies among youth and increase tolerance in communities. We have data to show that investing in women's empowerment and gender equality promotes peace and security.

Hence an integrated and balanced approach to security and development is needed to effectively address the challenges posed by violent extremism. Security interventions should aim to reinforce human security — mending the social contract between the State and society where it has eroded and strengthening social capital among communities where it has frayed — thus leading to more robust social cohesion.

Fundamentally, that would entail fostering community ownership, sustained investment in human capital, strengthening regional governance mechanisms and kick-starting economic prosperity through scaled-up investments at the local, national and regional levels.

UNDP is a global leader in providing support to address the root causes of violent extremism. We bring development solutions to complement security measures through a practice of global prevention of violent extremism, with regional and national projects for 34 countries.

Since 2015, our regional project to prevent violent extremism in Africa has supported 21 countries across the continent. Based on research from the *Journey to Extremism in Africa* report, UNDP's regional project has a reputation as a thought leader, trusted partner and innovator on the prevention of violent extremism in Africa. The project has shown that political will for collaboration in preventive cross-border activities is key to addressing spill-over effects. The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu used to say that war horses breed in the frontiers. Neglecting one's frontiers leads to war and violent extremism.

At UNDP, we cherish the importance of partnership. We believe in the "all of United Nations" approach. We work closely with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Peacebuilding Fund and other members of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. We also ensure close collaboration with members of civil society, the private sector and faith-based organizations.

Let me conclude by saying that we applaud the African Union (AU) for its visionary support to the Silencing the Guns campaign to promote prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa through the control of illegal weapons. We salute the AU for recognizing the need for whole-of-society approaches to address violence in all its forms. We invite the AU's Peace and Security Council to unify supporters of the diverse perceptions and interpretations of the concept of the prevention of violent extremism.

We also call on all Member States to strongly invest in, and to scale-up, risk-informed development and prevention to sustainably address violent extremism by tackling its root causes. The United Nations system will continue to play a decisive role in support of Africa.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Dieye for his briefing and for his review of the philosophical ideas of Lao Tzu.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank the Council members for their valuable contributions to the statement.

In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2020/5.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

China thanks the briefers, namely, Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo, speaking on behalf of Secretary-General António Guterres; Ambassador Fatima Kyari Mohammed, speaking on behalf of Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, Assistant-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the United Nations Development Programme Administrator, speaking on behalf of the Administrator.

Terrorism is the common enemy of all peoples of the world. At present, the context of the international counter-terrorism effort is complex and challenging. The threat of terrorism is such that no country is immune or untouched by it. What affects one country affects all. As a continent blessed with the greatest development potential, Africa has been deeply troubled by terrorism and violent extremism in recent years. While old problems persist, new threats have been emerging.

Africa is increasingly becoming the front line in the global response to terrorism. Terrorist organizations, taking advantage of the instabilities in some parts of Africa, have been infiltrating and spreading across the continent, disrupting regional stability and socioeconomic development and undermining world peace and security at large. It behoves the international community to take swift, effective and coordinated actions to help put African countries in a better position to address terrorist threats with greater capabilities, resources and means in order to eradicate the breeding grounds for terrorism once and for all and to combat terrorism and extremism in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

In that vein, China takes note of presidential statement S/PRST/2020/5, just adopted, regarding capacity-building, training and sharing of best practices and lessons learned, as well as strengthening the internal coordination of United Nations agencies. The statement reflects the key points of consensus we have reached. China believes that it can provide critical guidance for our next steps. I would like to take this opportunity to underscore the following points.

First, we must apply uniform standards across the board and forge consensus on counter-terrorism. Counter-terrorism in Africa is an important part of the global fight against terrorism. In helping Africa fight this scourge, the international community should uphold uniform counter-terrorism standards. All terrorist activities must be dealt with unflinchingly, regardless of the flags the perpetrators fly, the countries the perpetrators target or the tactics they employ. Linking terrorism with specific religions or ethnicities should be avoided.

China supports the United Nations in playing a central coordinating role in helping African States build greater counter-terrorism capacity and in prioritizing counter-terrorism capacity-building in African countries. We support the international community in providing counter-terrorism assistance to African countries with no political strings attached.

Secondly, we should take a holistic approach and tackle terrorism and extremism root and branch. Underdevelopment in the socioeconomic sphere is a major driver for the breeding and spread of terrorism and extremism in some parts of Africa. Many African countries are confronted with a whole raft of challenges in infrastructure, development, poverty eradication, employment, education, public health and social protection. It is incumbent upon the international community to help African countries continue to implement the Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU) and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to achieve lasting peace and stability through economic development, poverty eradication and improvement of peoples' livelihoods.

In particular, attention should be focused on education and employment of African youth. The briefers today all referred to issues in this area. We should do everything we can to help African youth not fall prey to the pernicious influence of extremist ideologies. During the Beijing summit of the Forum on

China-Africa Cooperation, China launched eight major initiatives, many of which are designed to provide African youth with assistance and training, so that they are better educated and more employable.

Thirdly, we must respect Africa's leadership and ownership consistently. When helping Africa in its fight against terrorism, the international community should support African countries in finding African solutions to African problems. When providing counter-terrorism assistance, the international community should respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the countries concerned, take fully on board the views and ideas of African countries and regional organizations, support their priorities, feel compassion with them as they face their anxieties and concerns, and focus on solving those issues considered most urgent by the countries concerned. It is particularly important to help African countries acquire improved capabilities and means for, inter alia, fighting terrorism, enhancing information-sharing, combating foreign terrorist fighters, and putting an end to terrorist financing and the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes. We hope that the implementation on the ground of the relevant measures articulated in the presidential statement will be possible.

Fourthly, we should give play to the role of regional organizations and create synergy for fighting terrorism. African countries cannot go it alone in combating terrorism and extremism in Africa. The African Union and other relevant regional and subregional organizations have a more comprehensive knowledge of the countries in the region and their counter-terrorism needs. They are uniquely positioned to help to solve the continent's issues. China supports African countries in coming together to empower themselves and tackle the threat of terrorism as one. We shall continue to support the AU Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative.

It is our hope that the United Nations will scale up its coordination and cooperation with the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations, support African countries in actively implementing relevant Security Council resolutions and the United Nations global counter-terrorism strategy, step up the sharing of best practices and lessons learned, and work in synergy. China attaches great importance to the concerns of African countries and stands squarely behind African countries and regional organizations in their tireless efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism.

Through the China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund we provide financial support for the United Nations counter-terrorism training programmes in Africa. During the Beijing summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation mentioned earlier, we decided to establish the China-Africa Peace and Security Forum and the China-Africa Peace and Security Cooperation Fund in support of cooperation in peace and security between my country and the African continent. We have provided, through the African Union, ¥300 million of assistance to counter-terrorism operations in the Sahel region and the development of the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force. We shall continue to provide materiel and capacity-building systems to African countries for the purposes of combating terrorism to the best of our capabilities. China is ready, along with the rest of the international community, to support and assist African countries in combating terrorism and extremism, and continue our constructive contributions to peace, stability and development in Africa.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, we extend special thanks to the Chinese presidency for convening this debate on such a critical and worrying topic, which deserves our full attention and commitment. We are pleased with the presence and the words of Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and the briefings by Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, and Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, Assistant-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.

The dramatic deterioration of security in West Africa, particularly in the States of the Sahel region — in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger — as a result of violence caused by terrorism is simply alarming, having increased fivefold — according to known official estimates, to more than 4,000 reported deaths in 2019 compared to 2016. Together with the international community, the Dominican Republic expresses its strongest condemnation of the terrorist attacks that have caused these regrettable deaths, with the expression of our most heartfelt condolences to the families of the

victims and our solidarity with the affected countries. Such a high number of unjustified deaths is an urgent call to be attentive and take bold and seamless measures, based on a profound reflection that not only assesses the limitations of these States in effectively confronting the presence and threats of terrorist groups and violent extremism leading to terrorism in their territories as an additional element that exacerbates conflicts in the region, but more importantly considers the causes that give rise to it, its spaces and its followers.

We must pay particular attention to the dangerous connection and collaboration of terrorist groups among themselves and with transnational organized crime syndicates that engage in trafficking in drugs, human beings, illicit arms and cultural property, piracy, exploitation of natural resources, among many other crimes. It is a true synergy of evil that is weakening the structures of States, slowing their development and distorting their social fabric.

Consequently, we advocate, as we always do, especially in the context of peace and security in Africa, a proactive and broad participation of women in the development of comprehensive strategies to address the structural causes of the security crisis and actions to combat terrorism and prevent violent extremism leading to terrorism, recognizing the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, in peacebuilding and in the management of post-conflict situations.

It is also important to strengthen the role, in particular in decision-making, and to address the needs of youth, who represent the vast majority of the population. This will require a holistic approach, with a focus on the whole of Government and all of society, including civil society organizations, in efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, by creating development opportunities, such as education and jobs, and minimum guarantees of governance and security.

At the same time, we continue to be concerned about the threat posed by the number of foreign terrorist fighters returning to their countries of origin or relocating to terrorist groups, which represents an enormous challenge for African countries both in terms of resources and logistics. In that regard, we call for ongoing international support to strengthen their capacities for prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration, among many other areas.

The fight against terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism requires the full and effective implementation of the relevant resolutions, including those on the prevention and suppression of the financing of terrorism, as well as all relevant sanctions measures against individuals, groups, enterprises and associated entities. That is where cooperation among States and the support of subregional and regional organizations becomes indispensable.

We therefore commend the efforts and progress made in that regard by African countries, the African Union and other subregional and regional entities, as well as the ongoing support of relevant entities of the United Nations system.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, allow me to express my gratitude to the Chinese delegation for the initiative to convene a Security Council debate on the urgent issue of countering terrorism and extremism in Africa. We would like to thank today's briefers, Ms. DiCarlo, Ms. Fatima Mohammed and Mr. Abdoulaye Dieye, for their interventions. We align ourselves with presidential statement S/PRST/2020/5, which was promptly prepared by our Chinese colleagues. Along with the other Council members, we reaffirm our solidarity with the Governments of the countries of the Sahel, the Lake Chad basin and the Horn of Africa in their legitimate efforts to combat the threat of terrorism. At the same time, we would like to emphasize that the challenges and security threats that we are discussing today are unfortunately becoming just as relevant to the entire African continent.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere condolences to the families and friends of the civilians and military and law enforcement personnel of African countries whose lives were taken in the wave of violence and terrorism that has swept across the continent in recent months.

The devastating impact of extremism and terrorism is today particularly evident in West Africa, where there has been a significant increase in the number of terrorist crimes in just a few years. The situation is complicated by a number of radical forces joining the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), its transformation into an extensive underground terrorist network and the establishment of new regional affiliates. In that regard, the presidential statement adopted today highlights the need for comprehensive implementation of Security

Council sanctions against ISIL cells in West Africa, the Greater Sahara and Libya.

Following the military defeat of ISIL in Syria and Iraq, the flow of foreign terrorist fighters into Africa has increased. Disguising themselves as migrants and refugees, they carry out sabotage and recruitment activities, spreading extremist and terrorist ideology among young people and vulnerable groups. Our Western colleagues regularly promote numerous technical assistance projects for African countries based on the politicized concept of preventing violent extremism. In that regard, we would like to note a few points.

First, any technical assistance in that area should be provided only at the request of the States concerned. It should also be borne in mind that not all States have prevention mechanisms in which non-State actors play a leading role. Civil society should clearly be involved in preventing extremism and terrorism. For example, the clergy, opinion leaders, the media, educational institutions and sports organizations make a significant contribution to that task. However, all that will be meaningless if Government agencies do not coordinate such efforts, acknowledging their primary responsibility for maintaining public safety. I will not focus in detail on Russian approaches to preventing the spread of terrorist ideology, since that topic will be the subject of a separate open briefing, organized jointly with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, on 16 March.

Secondly, in assessing the external assistance needs of States in the region, priority should be given to implementing universal counter-terrorism conventions and protocols and Security Council resolutions, as well as regional instruments. We note the African Union's own efforts in that context. In addition, we call on States of the region to look more closely at the innovative Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which is open to accession by all interested parties.

Thirdly, in line with the presidential statement adopted today, States and the relevant international organizations should take a balanced approach to analysing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, paying equal attention to internal and external factors. Clearly, resolving socioeconomic problems, including reducing unemployment, would

help to eradicate the breeding ground for terrorism. At the same time, as I have already noted and as the presidential statement rightly states, the current rise in terrorism is largely due to the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and the expansion of major terrorist groups, that is, external reasons. In fact, there are many more such factors. In the past, certain countries did not take into account that attempts to establish a system of "managed chaos" would inevitably be followed by a loss of control over the situation. The destruction of statehood in Libya determined the nature of the current terrorist threat in Africa. It is evident that it is difficult to talk about progress in the fight against terrorism in the region without progress in the reconstruction of that country.

The Libyan context can also not be overlooked with regard to the priority task of combating the flow of arms to terrorists, in accordance with the document adopted today. In his most recent report on small arms and light weapons (S/2019/1011), the Secretary-General expressed serious concern about the enormous quantity of weapons from Libyan stockpiles that illegally enter the countries of the Sahel and beyond. In other words, that flow has not decreased even nine years since the beginning of the civil war in Libya. Unfortunately, not all countries are equally concerned about that problem.

In conclusion, I would like to note that Russia is closely monitoring developments in key regions of Africa. We already provide appropriate military and technical assistance to a number of countries and training to military and police personnel. We call on the international community to pool its efforts in providing technical assistance to African countries and to focus it on the truly important aspects of combating extremism and terrorism.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia): I thank the briefers, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Ambassador Mohammed and Mr. Dieye, for their valuable interventions.

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — the Niger, South Africa and Tunisia — and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

At the outset, we would like to thank China for choosing to focus on the fight against terrorism and violent extremism in Africa during its current presidency of the Security Council. We welcome the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2020/5 on this issue, which constitutes a testimony of the

unified efforts of the Council to address and combat this scourge.

Terrorism and violent extremism remain among the most serious threats to Africa's stability and development. The threat is manifesting itself in both small- to large-scale attacks on civilians and infrastructure. In many instances, it evolves into open armed confrontations, unprecedented in terms of scale and impact, between terrorist groups and State security institutions, leaving hundreds killed or maimed, thousands displaced and living in poor humanitarian conditions, disrupting economic activity in the affected areas, instilling fear among populations, creating confusion and, most of all, exhausting the already limited capacities of State institutions and forces.

It is important to note that terrorist groups in Africa, while driven primarily by a local agenda, have colluded with groups that existed beyond the continent, as evidenced by the emergence of Al-Qaida and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) local affiliates to carry out their agendas in Africa. These dynamics are having serious ramifications on the continent with ISIL's attempts to resurface on African territory, particularly the Sahel region, while being driven out of Iraq and Syria.

In fact, foreign terrorist fighters are increasingly relocating into the continent. They are mainly attracted to conflict zones and territories where Government presence is weak, particularly along the porous borders. They exploit local grievances, poverty, lack of public services and security. They resort to the use of barbaric force against populations and engage in cross-border criminal activities.

In short, terrorist groups in Africa have become a key factor of instability, exacerbating conflicts and increasing their complexity, seriously challenging State authority and threatening regional and international peace and security. Certain Al-Qaida and Islamic State groups appear to be working together and coordinating attacks to grab large swaths of territory.

The ongoing war in Libya, fuelled by foreign players who keep sending weapons and fighters, is feeding this terrorist dynamic on the continent and continues to reinforce terrorist groups and to affect the situation in Africa, especially in the Sahel region. We call on concerned States to respect their obligations and to refrain from violating the Security Council arms

embargo imposed on Libya. Likewise, we call on the Security Council to take up its responsibility to ensure full compliance with its related resolutions.

Similarly, the recurrent attacks suffered today by the populations of the Sahel countries, the Lake Chad basin and the Horn of Africa must challenge us all and encourage us to take measures to maintain international peace and security before it is too late.

No later than last Sunday, a terrorist group attacked the villages of Dinguila and Barga, in northern Burkina Faso, killing 43 people and wounding many others. We condemn in the strongest terms this terrorist attack. We extend our deepest condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims and to the people of Burkina Faso and express our solidarity and full support to the Government of Burkina Faso in its efforts to fight terrorism.

African States and communities have shown great resilience and courage in standing in the face of terrorism and violent extremism. However, the situation urgently calls for the international community to strengthen its active and coordinated action in support of these efforts. In this regard, we would like to highlight the need for further action in the following areas.

First, it is crucial to detect, disrupt and prosecute all means of support for terrorism in Africa, including providing financial resources to terrorist groups, supplying them with weapons, including small arms and light weapons, facilitating the return and relocation of foreign terrorist fighters to conflict zones, as well as the exploitation of religion to radicalize and recruit young people and to justify the use of violence. Capacity-building programmes need to be reinforced to counter terrorist narratives and the use of information and communication technologies to spread the terrorist propaganda.

Secondly, we must address the root causes and conditions conducive to terrorism in Africa. Terrorism and violence find a particularly conducive breeding ground in negative national or regional circumstances such as poor socioeconomic conditions, marginalization, lack of education, unemployment, gender inequality, human rights violations, political instability, social unrest and armed conflict. It is therefore important that States adopt comprehensive and integrated strategies to counter terrorism by promoting sustainable development, tackling poverty and inequality, protecting and promoting human

rights, improving governance, including in the security sector, cracking down on corruption and bolstering the participation and leadership of youth and women at all decision-making levels. These strategies need to adopt a whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach, including through public-private partnerships and cooperation with civil-society organizations in the development, implementation and assessment of counter-terrorism measures.

Thirdly, it is vital to address the existing and evolving interlinkages between transnational organized crime and terrorism. The operational efficiency of terrorist groups in the region is enhanced by de-confliction and collaboration between them and criminal groups, as both use similar smuggling routes and invest in lucrative illicit activities, including trafficking in arms, drugs, cultural property and natural resources, as well as through kidnapping for ransom, extortion, money-laundering and robbery.

Fourthly, we must strengthen the capacity of States to mitigate attacks on soft targets by establishing effective means to develop and further implement contingency and response plans in order to protect, investigate, respond to and recover from damage from terrorist attacks against soft targets.

Finally, we must enhance inter-agency, bilateral and regional coordination and information-sharing, particularly in the fields of border security and management, criminal justice, travel information and police and intelligence cooperation. In this regard, we reiterate the importance of the efforts and initiatives of the African Union, including the “Silencing the Guns” campaign, aiming to achieve a conflict-free Africa, prevent genocide, make peace a reality for all and rid the continent of wars, violent conflicts, human rights violations and humanitarian disasters. We also welcome the cooperation with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism in the organization of the African Regional High-Level Conference on Counter Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism, held in Nairobi in July 2019.

We seize this opportunity to call for stronger and more coordinated international cooperation to implement counter-terrorism measures and initiatives in the region, particularly with regard to the implementation of the international coalition for the Sahel.

In conclusion, we reiterate our commitment to spare no effort in combating terrorism and violent extremism on our continent and to renew our will to do so, in accordance with the goals and principles of the United Nations Charter and with respect for our obligations under international law, including human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law. We stand ready to cooperate with our partners and all relevant stakeholders to achieve an Africa free from terrorism and violent extremism.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): We are grateful to China for organizing this meeting on an extremely important topic, and we very much welcome today’s adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2020/5. We are pleased in particular that it recognizes the importance of a holistic approach, regional strategies and action plans, as well as the importance of human rights, the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism and tackling that, and the importance of building inclusive and meaningful partnerships to counter-terrorism, bring perpetrators to justice and prevent violent extremism. It is relevant not only to Africa, but beyond. I also thank our briefers for their very rich and informative presentations.

As we have heard previously in this Chamber, the terrorist threat in Africa is rapidly evolving, and the threat of foreign terrorist fighters and returnees highlights the risks posed by Da’esh and Al-Qaida affiliates, including groups in Mali, the Niger and Burkina Faso, among others. We are very pleased that the United Nations has listed the Islamic State West Africa Province and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara under the sanctions regime of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999).

But we also know that the threat of terrorism does not follow boundaries. The United Kingdom therefore stresses the value of international and regional cooperation to identify threats, strengthen responses and ensure that those responses align with international norms and standards. Having the right mechanisms and partnerships in place is key to ensuring that we can exchange information about plots and ensure that the perpetrators can be arrested, investigated and prosecuted, in accordance with national and international legal obligations. Too often, information-sharing, even within Governments, is inadequate, let alone between countries. But there is a simple equation: the greater the information-sharing and cooperation, the worst terrorists do. I am afraid that

the inverse is also true. Relations between countries can be complex, but terrorism should always be a common cause.

The Security Council has developed a robust counter-terrorism framework. Member States must continue to implement relevant resolutions. We stress the important role of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) in working with States to strengthen compliance with counter-terrorism obligations and identify technical assistance needs. We encourage the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the United Nations Development Programme and others to follow up on CTED's recommendations and help Member States to strengthen their capacities. We believe that the United Nations should continue to work to enhance capacity-building efforts in Africa, which also complement bilateral support given by members of the Council and other States Members of the United Nations.

For our part, the United Kingdom supports counter-terrorism capacity-building projects through bilateral programmes in countries throughout Africa, which tackle different dimensions of counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism, including through development, police, military and other forms of security cooperation. A few examples, if I might, are as follow. In East Africa, we have been working with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to construct detention facilities in Somalia, in line with international standards, while in Kenya, we are collaborating to strengthen crisis response and crime-scene management. In West Africa, we are working with prosecutors in Nigeria on counter-terrorism cases at the pretrial stage, with the aim of a higher conviction rate, and we have collaborated on aviation security.

I would also say, if I may, as the Foreign Office's National Security Director, I took control of the Government's response to the attacks in Tunis and Sousse, where over 30 British nationals were killed. We have worked tirelessly since with our Tunisian friends to build capacity and support their — and I stress the word "their" — security priorities. Elsewhere, we are also working with local law enforcement and criminal justice officials across different African countries to build robust cases based on evidence to process those terrorist cases through the court system to hopefully achieve conviction and imprisonment and develop rule-of-law-based operational responses.

As highlighted by the presidential statement we adopted today, tackling terrorism is not simply a matter of security. Of course, security is vital, and, in all our countries, it is crucial that we provide a proportionate security response to stopping attacks and arresting known terrorists. But it is not of itself sufficient. An issue we face in many countries is the provision of essential services by terrorist groups in particular areas. Our approach must therefore be security-led, while providing services and ensuring a positive impact in communities.

What about those whom our security forces have not been able to individually identify as terrorists or as conducting terrorist attacks? That is where the prevention agenda comes into play to prevent people from becoming or supporting terrorists or violent extremists. I want to stress Rosemary DiCarlo's point here: there cannot be a one-size-fits-all solution. Prevention needs to be, above all, a local endeavour, taking account of local factors and developed with local communities and local authorities. What works in London will not necessarily work in Manchester. What is needed in Eastleigh will not necessarily be what is needed in Mombasa.

Earlier I talked about counter-terrorism being a common cause, even when relations between countries are difficult. I can say, as the Foreign Office's National Security Director, that I also had the honour to visit Moscow, and I have regularly discussed this issue with my Russian colleagues. I feel that it is important to keep dialogue open and work together on counter-terrorism issues. We have enough arguments with our Russian friends here, and I do not see any need to do so on this issue. I am therefore not going to respond to the Russian representative's political points. But I do want to say that, when I listen to the concerns that he expressed, I want to reassure our Russian friends that the prevention of violent extremism — the prevention agenda — can never be an externally driven approach. It can work only in cooperation with States, whether at the national level or the local level, and it is not a dichotomy between the two. State involvement and community involvement should not be thought of as exclusive. I hope that provides some reassurance as to the United Kingdom's view on the approach that we are trying to take.

Let me draw to an end by saying that the nature of the threat today calls for not just a whole-of-Government but also a whole-of-society approach,

based on strong partnerships among Governments, communities and international and regional actors. But we also know that measures that infringe upon human rights and put citizens at odds with their own Government can exacerbate tensions and fuel radicalization and recruitment by terrorist groups. While States have legitimate concerns about terrorism, we must stress that all responses must be proportionate. As we so often reiterate in the Council's resolutions, measures must not foster association between terrorism and any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. That is not just what is the right thing to do, but it is the most effective approach. Mass stigmatization or repression of a minority or a religion is only likely to fuel grievances and create a narrative that can further radicalize individuals, locally and globally.

Let me conclude by saying that the threat picture is changing in Africa, and terrorists everywhere continue to adapt their techniques and operations. We see a fast-evolving situation on the continent, with violent extremism spreading outside of terrorist-affected countries and incipient groups forming in new locations. That will have major long-term implications, not just for the continent but also for security and prosperity more widely. The United Kingdom stands by our African partners and friends in this fight. It is one that we must win.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for putting this very important issue on the agenda of the Security Council. We heard from the three wonderful briefers as they gave a very bleak picture of where we stand with regard to terrorism. Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo mentioned Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida affiliates. Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye mentioned the arc of instability. And Ms. Fatima Mohammed mentioned that whole regions are at war, with infrastructure and livelihoods destroyed. She also mentioned the technological advances by terrorists, with the use of drone techniques, among others. Ms. DiCarlo, as well as others, including Mr. José Singer Weisinger, mentioned the number of victims, reaching into the tens of thousands, who have been killed. I agree with Ms. Mohammed that there are very complex situations, which necessitate complex solutions — or, as presidential statement S/PRST/2020/5 states, a holistic approach.

In terms of what we must do, I see significant coherence in the responses provided by the briefers

and other speakers, in particular the representative of the United Kingdom, and that is prevention. It is important to understand the reasons and drivers behind individuals, specifically young people, joining terrorist and extremist groups in order to then enable societies and individuals to become resilient to terrorism and extremist ideologies. What are resilient societies? They are societies that respect the rule of law and human rights, are inclusive and protect rather than marginalize minorities, ensure the meaningful participation of women and provide economic prospects. As Mr. Dieye mentioned, not enough money is spent on prevention. He gave us statistics on the much greater results yielded by one dollar spent on prevention compared to the large sums spent on crisis response.

Of course, the long-term approach of making societies resilient has to be complemented by the work of law enforcement agencies and by security sectors that counter terrorism and prosecute perpetrators. Moreover, it is very important how that is done and how enforcement agencies act, that they be held accountable for human rights and that they respect the rule of law. I would like to pick up a figure cited by Mr. Dieye that we should bear in mind, and that is that 71 per cent of the respondents in the study he mentioned stated that Government action, including human rights violations and disrespect for fundamental principles such as the rule of law, had triggered their joining a terrorist or violent extremist group. The authors of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) study came to the conclusion that

“dramatic reappraisal of state security-focused interventions is urgently required, including more effective oversight of human rights compliance, rule of law and state accountability”.

We should take that advice very seriously. The study also points out that socioeconomic marginalization fosters radicalization, though it draws the very important conclusion that socioeconomic marginalization is not the main driver of terrorism. In other words, poverty does not automatically lead to terrorism, but on the other hand prosperity does not immunize societies and individuals against recruitment by terrorists. Thus, again, the key is prevention, respect for human dignity, the creation of an environment where young people can earn a living, support families and have opportunities for social, economic and political participation.

Mr. Dieye also mentioned quality education in his presentation. The UNDP study calls for childhood education “enabling critical thinking, social cohesion, peace education and civic engagement values”. In that respect, what Ms. Mohammed said in her statement about the fact that thousands of schools are closed is rather depressing and extremely worrying because the spaces created in schools are not intended for the individual.

Furthermore, it is important to include gender equality and a gender perspective in counter-terrorism efforts. We say this frequently — in fact, we said it yesterday in relation to Afghanistan (see S/PV.8742) — gender equality and meaningful participation in decision-making and peace processes are crucial. We should also mention sexual violence. We all remember the horrible acts of Boko Haram, a group that has abducted hundreds of girls. One issue that was new to me in reading the study, and which Mr. Dieye mentioned, is female radicalization. That is also something we have to look at.

I do not want to take up too much time. We need to work on regional cooperation. That is clear. Germany is co-Chair of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, and we actively participate in regional cooperation, in particular with the Group of Five for the Sahel, about which my French colleague will say more. In addition, we work on disarmament and arms export control and promote the Silencing the Guns initiative. However, what remains the most important is national action and national responsibility for counter-terrorism and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. It is very important that the values we demonstrate as Governments also strengthen our credibility in the fight against terrorism.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Chinese presidency for organizing this debate on one of France’s major priorities, as well as Ms. DiCarlo, Ms. Mohammed and Mr. Dieye for their introductory statements.

While the terrorist threat persists throughout the world, the African continent has not been spared and is even increasingly exposed to it, whether in the Sahel, the Lake Chad basin, the Horn of Africa or, now, in certain regions of central and southern Africa. Terrorist groups continue to attack the authority of States and civilian populations, and this threat is not distinct from the international terrorist movement. Terrorist groups

operating on the African continent are tied to Al-Qaida and Da’esh and have links to organized criminal groups.

Our first priority must therefore be to develop a global approach to the fight against terrorism, involving all actors and addressing all the causes of the phenomenon. In that regard, I welcome once again the growing strength of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), which, after 11 operations in 2019, is pursuing its operational engagement in close coordination with Operation Barkhane, in particular through the establishment of a joint command mechanism in Niamey. The strengthening of international cooperation, in particular among the States of the region, is a key prerequisite for a concerted and effective approach to the fight against terrorism.

I also recall the outcomes of the Pau summit of 13 January, which brought together the Heads of State of the G-5 Sahel countries and their main multilateral partners — the United Nations, the African Union and the International Organization of la Francophonie — and called for the launch of a coalition for the Sahel with the aim of strengthening the coordination of the international community’s efforts. The coalition is based on four pillars — the fight against terrorism, building security sector capacity in the G-5 Sahel States, support for the redeployment of sovereign services and development aid — in order to address all the causes of terrorism. Finally, our collective commitment also extends to the fight against Al-Shabaab in Somalia and against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin region, where we support, bilaterally and via the European Union, the operations conducted by our African partners.

Beyond the security response and the restoration of State authority, we must act side by side with the African population. Without action tailored to the populations most exposed to the terrorist threat, namely, women and youth, we will not be able to address the root causes of the threat or respond effectively. Five years ago, the Council recognized the role of women in the fight against violent extremism in resolution 2242 (2015). It is time to translate that recognition into action. Moreover, as nearly half of Africa’s population will be under the age of 25 in 2050, we must take into account that terrorist groups are recruiting among those young people, some of whom are still children. Education, on the one hand, and socioeconomic development, on the other, are the keys to combating such recruitment.

In addition to education and respect for human rights, we must also combat the spread of terrorist propaganda that targets women and young people in particular, especially on the Internet. The Christchurch Appeal, launched in Paris in May 2019, is a new and important contribution to our country's efforts to combat the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes. Senegal was one of its early supporters and I am pleased that several others have joined the Appeal.

Lastly, drying up the sources of funding is key to the fight against terrorism. Resolution 2462 (2019) reaffirms the obligations of States to combat terrorism financing. For the first time, it also proposes solutions to establish the necessary balance between criminalizing financial support for terrorist activities and protecting the humanitarian space. Its full implementation is a priority.

The fight against terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism must be carried out in accordance with international humanitarian law, refugee law and human rights law. We reject the use of threat of terrorism as a pretext for violating freedom of expression, the right to protest and freedom of religion or belief. Similarly, the fight against terrorism cannot be used as justification for attacks on civilians or the repression of humanitarian actors in Africa or elsewhere.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): First, we would like to express our gratitude to Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo, Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed and Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye for their insightful briefings.

Terrorism is a global threat and the international community is united in the fight against it. Much has been done in terms of legal instruments, cooperation framework and concrete actions at all levels — national, regional and global. In addition, considerable resources have been mobilized for the fight. Yet, terrorism remains a serious threat in many corners of the world, including Africa where, for decades, people have longed for and badly needed peace and stability. For that reason, we would also like to thank the Chinese presidency for organizing today's timely and very important debate.

We are deeply concerned about the growing number of attacks by Islamic State and Al-Qaida affiliates in the Sahel, especially on the borders of Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger. As stated in the most recent report of the Secretary-General, those countries suffer heavily from attacks against their Governments' security and defence forces, humanitarian actors and

even the Blue Helmets. The number of people killed by terrorists every year in those countries is estimated to have increased fivefold since 2016. In other parts of Africa, including North Africa, the Lake Chad basin and the Horn of Africa, terrorist groups, including foreign terrorist fighters, are actively operating and recruiting. Terrorism denies African countries and people their rights to peace, stability and development. With the existence and larger operation of terrorist groups, the presence of State authorities will continue to face serious limitations, making the fight even harder. Against that backdrop, my delegation would like to stress the following points.

First, it is vital to address the root causes of terrorism and the drivers of violent extremism conducive to terrorism. Without that, terrorism will persist and have a fertile breeding ground. We therefore support the holistic approach to preventing terrorism by strengthening governance, settling unresolved conflicts, addressing exclusion, poverty and inequality, enhancing sustainable socioeconomic development and so on.

Secondly, to fight the spread of terrorism and violent extremism, we need to step up our efforts to reject their ideologies, narratives, hatred, division and violent incitement, while promoting a culture of peace and tolerance. The roles of world leaders, eminent persons, the media, community leaders and so on in that regard cannot be overemphasized.

Thirdly, terrorism cannot survive without finance. It is therefore of the utmost importance to tear down terrorist financing networks and further strengthen our legal and institutional capacity to effectively prevent, detect, stop and punish illegal acts. We urge all parties to fully implement resolution 2462 (2019) on combating terrorism financing, as well as other relevant documents.

Fourthly, we must effectively implement international instruments and Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism. At the same time, we need to strengthen international cooperation, assistance and solidarity for affected countries, especially in terms of capacity-building and providing resources. Cooperation among countries of the region is vital, particularly in terms of a coordinated response, strengthening data, intelligence and experience-sharing, border security and management, and cross-border coordination. We commend the regional and subregional efforts of the African Union

(AU) in that regard, including the Organization of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and the AU Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa, the establishment of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad basin, and the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm our strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We would also like to reiterate our solidarity and readiness to cooperate with and support our African brothers and sisters in their fight against terrorism for peace, stability and development for all.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytsverve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to commend the Chinese presidency for convening today's debate on such a timely and important topic.

I also welcome the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2020/5.

I thank Ms. DiCarlo, Ms. Mohammed and Mr. Dieye for their enlightening briefings.

As we have heard, Da'esh and Al-Qaida affiliates are entrenched in conflict zones, in particular in the Sahel, Somalia and the Arabian peninsula, where they target, with misleading rhetoric, those who are often marginalized and disillusioned by the dearth of economic opportunities. Local conflicts are exploited by terrorist movements, such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Al-Shabaab. Such groups appropriate functions generally conducted by States by imposing their ideology of violent extremism. We are concerned about the increase in the number of attacks perpetrated by Da'esh and Al-Qaida affiliates in the Sahel. The fact that such groups increasingly work together, despite their rivalry in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world, is also worrisome. They attack civilian infrastructure, military convoys and Government buildings. Terrorism on the African continent dovetails with transnational crime and is compounded by other sources of instability, such as the proliferation of armed groups and human trafficking.

The challenges are formidable. We must overcome them by working with the African continent. The continent needs our support. Africa can count on the support of my country and, as Belgium is a State

member of the European Union, I can also say that of the European Union.

As many representatives brought up earlier, I recall the importance of following a comprehensive approach in the fight against terrorism. It is indeed clear that the phenomenon of terrorism in Africa extends far beyond the area of maintaining law and order. It is also deeply rooted in the challenges specific to the region and requires an integrated and comprehensive approach on the part of society. We will not succeed by simply putting in place increasingly sophisticated surveillance systems, or by creating a culture of repression at the hands of security forces.

African countries in which terrorism finds fertile ground are also in need of economic development and political prospects rooted in quality education. It is imperative therefore to continue increasing young people's resilience to withstand the toxic rhetoric of Da'esh and Al-Qaida affiliates, while at the same time providing them with sustainable and inclusive economic opportunities and prospects for the future.

In that regard, I would like to refer to the joint communication of 9 March from the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, entitled "Towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa", which highlights in particular the importance of our cooperation on peace and governance.

In order to increase the resilience of African communities to withstand the harmful influence of terrorism, it will be imperative to strengthen governance, address the sense of exclusion and the lack of trust in Government institutions, enable civil society to operate in a safe and thriving space, promote political inclusion, including that of women, in the development of strategies to combat violent extremism, develop counter-terrorism policy that does not prevent individuals and civil society from enjoying their human rights and basic freedoms, acknowledge the significant role to be played by non-governmental organizations in the impartial delivery of humanitarian aid, and, lastly, mitigate the negative effects of the fight against terrorism on those humanitarian activities.

I welcome the fact that African countries are increasingly coming together on this difficult issue, with several regional and subregional initiatives in partnership with the United Nations from which the same conclusions are being drawn. The points that I just

brought up are reflected in the Charter of the United Nations, numerous Security Council resolutions and the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Belgium more than ever supports the United Nations efforts in the fight against terrorism on the African continent and the partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations within that framework.

Lastly, the fight against terrorism can be effective only if all measures taken by Member States to counter it comply with all obligations under international law, human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law. We stand ready to continue our efforts in the fight against terrorism, side by side and together with our African partners in full solidarity.

Mrs. Craft (United States of America): I thank Ms. DiCarlo, Ms. Mohammed and Mr. Dieye for briefing us on the evolving terrorist threat in Africa, as well as on continuing United Nations and African Union (AU) efforts to counter that threat.

By working together as a part of a coalition, the United States and its allies deliver crushing blows to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) in the Middle East. Yet ISIS has shown a dangerous ability to adapt by establishing ISIS branches around the world. It usually does that by co-opting existing insurgencies and filling the spaces that Governments either cannot reach or to which they turn a blind eye.

While the phenomenon is not unique to Africa, parts of the continent are especially vulnerable to this growing threat. The Sahel and the Horn of Africa are experiencing frequent attacks. We have seen that with the Al-Qaida-affiliated group known as Jama'a Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin, which aims to carve out its own territory in Mali and expand its sphere of influence in the Sahel. Last month, Somalia-based Al-Shabaab attacked an airfield in Kenya, killing three Americans. Such terrorist groups prey upon innocent civilians, kidnap foreigners and work to undercut legitimate Governments or moderate voices, all while trying to destroy basic human freedoms.

In order to tackle this threat in a comprehensive fashion and eliminate the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, it is imperative that we work together. This starts with leadership, sound governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights. As a study from the United Nations Development Programme on violent extremism in Africa found, State violence and

abuses by police and military were often the catalyst for radicalization to violence. That is true in Africa and other parts of the world.

We must ensure that any measures that we take to counter terrorism fully comply with our obligations under international law to respect human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. Counter-terrorism efforts, including on the Internet, fuel radicalization to violence when they do not respect basic human decency. That means that counter-terrorism can never justify the arbitrary incarceration of dissidents, journalists or members of religious and ethnic minority groups. Effective counter-terrorism must be firmly rooted in full and complete respect for human rights. They are mutually reinforcing, and respect for fundamental freedoms is the essential part of a successful counter-terrorism effort. Collective security does not override individual rights.

The United States is working to build the capacity of its African partners to prevent, detect, deter, disrupt and prosecute terrorists across the continent. The bottom line here is that terrorism can be beaten. This is a fight that Governments and citizens can win. We are working closely with our partners, like the Niger, to train the military and police on how to transfer physical and digital forensic evidence from the battlefield to civilian law-enforcement authorities, thereby enabling the prosecution of terrorists.

We are working throughout Africa to strengthen criminal justice systems, empower women and girls at risk of violent extremism, facilitate civilian security and community cohesion, and cut financial flows to terrorists, most of whom come from outside Africa. We are also working with our multilateral partners to address the evolving threat of terrorism globally, but especially in Africa.

We are pleased that the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate has prioritized the region. In the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities, we successfully listed ISIS in the Greater Sahara, ISIS West Africa and ISIS Libya last month. We thank the many countries that co-sponsored those listings, and we encourage other Member States to join us in identifying, sanctioning and targeting every ISIS affiliate around the world.

However, Governments alone cannot prevent and counter violent extremism. Civil society organizations often have crucial knowledge of, and engagement with, local communities to confront the challenges of recruitment and radicalization to violence. Together we can build communities resilient to terrorist narratives. We need to broaden our efforts to include leaders in the religious, education and youth development sectors who can help contest the destructive vision that terrorists are trying to advance.

In doing so, we must reject those who seek to bring violent extremist ideology into schools or social systems. For example, the United States recently partnered with the Mauritian Government to help officials identify risk factors of terrorism, speak out against terrorism and reach vulnerable youth and offer them relevant, positive and appealing alternatives. A comprehensive approach to countering terrorism has proven more effective over the long term, primarily because it draws from a variety of disciplines and promotes whole-of-government and whole-of-society efforts. That is why the United States continues to support the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, as well as United Nations efforts to help Member States develop national and regional plans of action to prevent violent extremism.

We encourage our African partners to continue working together to counter that growing threat. I look forward to hearing from our partners today and to continuing our discussions to advance our shared counter-terrorism objectives in the region and around the world.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I thank the briefers for their comprehensive overviews and the Chinese presidency for organizing today's debate. We welcome efforts to move the Security Council more into prevention mode and discuss solutions over symptoms.

The discussion today is very timely in the light of the nearly daily reports about attacks and killings by violent extremist groups. Sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, as well as the use and recruitment of children, have become systematic features of terrorism in Africa. We are seeing an uptick in violence in the Sahel region that is now threatening to spread to the wider West Africa, including to the coastal States. Moreover, the blurring of lines between groups in the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel is extremely concerning.

Terrorism and violent extremism in Africa are a cross-border phenomenon, exacerbated in areas where borders are porous and State authority insufficient. A year ago, the Council adopted resolution 2462 (2019), on terrorist financing, which highlighted the reliance of terrorists on illegal, often cross-border activities. Therefore, a truly effective response can come only through closely coordinated regional and international action. In Africa, the role of the African Union and subregional organizations is essential. Estonia further welcomes the cooperation of the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel and continues supporting these efforts by contributing with military personnel to the French-led Operation Barkhane.

States carry the primary responsibility for the safety of their people. Effective State engagement includes enabling access to basic services, such as health care and education, and ensuring an adequately trained security presence. States must ensure that all counter-terrorism measures comply with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Ignoring these obligations can undermine counter-terrorism activities and lead to increased radicalization, fed by violence and a sense of impunity.

We need a holistic approach that addresses the root causes of violent extremism. To build truly resilient communities, more attention needs to be given to lowering intercommunal tensions and nurturing reconciliation processes. Such activities often start at the level of a local village or a town's neighbourhood and, to succeed, they must be inclusive. It is important to support forums for intercommunal dialogue. Only through the equal and meaningful participation of women, youth and other relevant stakeholders will we be able to achieve a lasting solution. It is not a quick fix, but it is the only way forward.

Improving the socioeconomic situation and ensuring access to resources and governmental services reduces the space for violent extremist groups to act. People who have alternatives to earn their living will be less vulnerable to the recruitment efforts of violent extremist groups. Research shows that the main reasons for joining violent extremist groups revolve around people's sense of identity, perceptions of neglect and lack of opportunities. Most recruits give up violent extremism when given the chance of a better, peaceful life.

For improving people's livelihoods throughout Africa, the effects of climate change need to be taken into consideration. This is especially relevant in the Lake Chad basin, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region. It is important to track the roots and impacts of climate-related tensions and assist key stakeholders in providing support to those most affected. The United Nations has an important role to play here. Estonia supports the innovative initiatives adopted by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, such as drought coordination and the appointment of an environmental security adviser, and encourages further efforts in this line of work that will proactively address the threats.

Finally, the question of accountability and denying impunity to the perpetrators of crimes against civilians is an essential part of countering terrorism. It is also a vital part of a holistic approach to healing communities, restoring trust and creating conditions for sustainable peace.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): I should like first to thank you, Sir, for organizing this important meeting, which is also quite timely. I also thank Under-Secretary General Rosemary DiCarlo, my sister Ambassador Fatima Kyari Mohammed and Assistant Secretary-General Dieye of the United Nations Development Programme for their briefings.

We in Indonesia remain deeply concerned over the ongoing attacks and expansion of terrorist-related groups across Africa, which have caused many casualties among innocent civilian victims. We note from recent related reports of the Secretary-General that attacks by terrorist-related group have been increasing, both in numbers and in sophistication. Many speakers have alluded to that important fact. We also concur with Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, in particular on the point that we cannot address terrorism without addressing the underlying root causes and factors, including development, humanitarian, human rights and security challenges. I believe that that is quite an important point.

Indonesia commends the efforts of African countries in combatting terrorism, including through initiatives such as the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, the Multinational Joint Task Force and others. We are of the view that such efforts must continue to be supported. We therefore also welcome the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2020/5

earlier today. Having said that, allow me to share three points.

First, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to combatting terrorism. Each country and each region faces different challenges with regard to terrorism. They also have different capacities and priorities, which calls for assistance in different forms. It is important to take into account these specificities in each region in designing counter-terrorism approaches. Similarly, the nexus between transnational organized crime and terrorism also often has unique characteristics in each and every region. It should therefore be addressed through tailor-made measures and in accordance with applicable international law. It is also important to give our support to Africa's efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, as elaborated in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Secondly, we must enhance regional cooperation. It is important to advance regional dialogue, to share best practices and expertise, and to learn from each other's experiences in combatting terrorism. In addition, we need to facilitate collaboration in order to strengthen the capacity of African countries in addressing common and pressing challenges. One such challenge is the relocation and return of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), relocators and returnees, including their accompanying family members, which present significant challenges to Member States.

It is important to ensure adequate national and regional capacities in terms of prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration. In this regard, as mandated by resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017), it is crucially important for Member States to develop and implement comprehensive and tailored prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies, not only for FTFs but, most importantly, for home-grown terrorists. It is also important for countries of the region to be supported in the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative so as to ensure lasting stability and development, as envisioned in the African Union Agenda 2063.

Thirdly, we must promote a soft approach to counter-terrorism, in addition to other approaches. Apart from law enforcement, we need to continue promoting a soft approach in preventing and countering terrorism and to adhere to a comprehensive approach. This can be done, *inter alia*, by spreading the message of peace, moderation and tolerance in order to turn back

negativity and, at the same time, by amplifying credible positivity. We should also enhance the involvement of religious and community leaders, women and young people in combating terrorism. It is equally important to limit the environment in which terrorist groups can operate and address the underlying grievances that can be exploited by terrorist groups.

Preventing and combating terrorism is one of our priorities as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. We are also at the forefront in promoting tolerance and an integrated approach in combating terrorism and extremism, in line with the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

To conclude, all countries of Africa, supported by the international community, should work together in advancing integrated and coordinated strategies to counter terrorism so as to achieve the goal of a peaceful, stable and prosperous Africa. The international community should lend its utmost support, including in development and humanitarian assistance, so that terrorists do not have an excuse to exploit gaps in development. Indonesia is in solidarity with the people of Africa and will maintain its support for Africa through various initiatives and projects.

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

Mr. Skoog: I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this very important debate. I also thank the briefers this morning. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

Countering terrorism is a shared priority for Africa and Europe. In partnership, we remain committed to tirelessly mitigating this scourge. African partners have paid a huge price. I want to express our full solidarity with the victims of the recent terrorist attacks in Africa.

Despite tremendous efforts, the threat has not been curbed. The twenty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities (S/2020/53), issued in January, emphasizes the spread of the threat in West Africa as well as to new areas, including in East Africa.

I want to make a crucial point of departure in this entire discussion. In all our counter-terrorism efforts, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law has to be the basis. That must go hand in hand with gender- and child-sensitive measures. The failure to comply with human rights contributes to increased radicalization and further violence and fosters a sense of impunity. All our counter-terrorism efforts must therefore be framed in a human rights-based approach.

Terrorism is a transnational issue. As stressed by the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smail Chergui, terrorists have globalized their means and have a "new modus operandi". The globalization of terrorism calls for more coordinated and integrated responses. Terrorists benefit from various factors, including weak Government institutions, poor governance and border porosity, all of which foster corruption, illicit trafficking and exploitation of natural resources. The nexus between organized crime and the expansion of violent extremist ideologies further endangers the stability of fragile States, whose resilience needs to be enhanced in a comprehensive manner, as many around the table have said this morning.

In that regard, the European Union supports the efforts of its African partners to address the full spectrum of challenges that terrorism brings. The broad and growing range of our programmes in the field of preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism have focused on the Horn of Africa, the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel regions. We are deepening our support to African peace efforts, with a focus on a holistic and integrated approach to conflict and crises, investing in prevention, the fight against radicalization, building stabilization and better linking humanitarian, development, peace and security efforts.

We also continue to strengthen our cooperation with United Nations agencies with regard to counter-terrorism and prevention measures in African countries and regions. For example, we work with the Office for Counter-Terrorism to support the Sudan's efforts towards reform and reinforcement of the country's counter-terrorism structures. That includes assisting the transitional Government's counter-terrorism efforts and contributing to normalization of relations with the international community. We are also expanding contacts with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, with the aim of strengthening

our own understanding of the African region and better tailoring EU programming to local needs.

More focus is needed on diagnosis of the root causes of violent extremism. An integrated approach is key. The Pau summit of 13 January brought together the members of the Group of Five for the Sahel and launched the coalition for the Sahel. That is a good example of regional cooperation in the context of counter-terrorism in Africa. The EU is acting with the full range of policy, security and stabilization measures, development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

In conclusion, the European Union is fully committed to continuing to support and work with its partners in Africa and beyond. We look forward to the outcome of the African Union's extraordinary summit on counter-terrorism, to be held in South Africa in May.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Kabba (Sierra Leone): I am honoured to address the Security Council at this debate on peace and security in Africa: countering terrorism and extremism in Africa. At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March and for hosting this very important debate. Let me also thank Her Excellency Ms. Fatima Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, and Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye for the insightful overarching framework that they provided earlier in order for us to understand the situation in Africa.

The scourge of terrorism and violent extremism is a grave challenge to peace and security not only for Africa but also for the wider international community. Terrorism and violent extremism have jointly undermined Africa's development prospects, with shocking humanitarian consequences and a massive loss of lives across the continent. Terrorism and violent extremism, in all their facets, are a threat to international peace and security. Sierra Leone therefore appreciates the convening of this debate, which provides the opportunity to put forward multidimensional approaches and solutions to combating terrorism and violent extremism in Africa.

While governance and economic challenges and marginalization from political processes have been some of the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism across much of Africa, there is a need to focus on

prevention as a way to address both the proximate and the remote causes of terrorism. Clearly, solutions to this threat must therefore be expressly diagnosed and the root causes targeted and addressed. A comprehensive and inclusive approach to preventing and countering terrorism and extremism should involve adopting tenets of good governance, including the promotion and protection of human rights, implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and climate adaptation and resilience measures as a way of addressing or preventing terrorism and extremism.

Many concrete resolutions have been adopted on the prevention and eradication of terrorism and violent extremism across Africa, particularly in the Sahel region and other affected areas. Africa has demonstrated courage and resilience in dealing with the challenges of terrorism and extremism so as to sustain peace and security across the continent. However, given the transnational nature of terrorism, multilateral cooperation with Africa must be enhanced and the United Nations should step up its support to Member States to strengthen national capabilities and capacities against terrorism and extremism. There is therefore a need for well-equipped and well-resourced Members of the United Nations to provide both the technical and financial support to enable Africa to strengthen its counter-terrorism efforts, as well as for the international community to offer its full support in the implementation of mechanisms adopted for the prevention and eradication of terrorism and extremism in Africa.

Sierra Leone has taken a number of measures to guarantee the full implementation of the counter-terrorism strategy of the Economic Community of West African States. These measures include but are not limited to the development of a communication strategy that involves radio and television discussion programmes and press conferences to counter radicalization. In addition, the Government of Sierra Leone, in February 2020, organized a national workshop for religious leaders from across the country in a bid to strengthen collaboration between the Government and the religious community.

In support of the Government's efforts, some of those religious leaders have also embarked on a nationwide tour, delivering sermons on topics delinking Islam from terrorism and underscoring the Islamic precept of a religion of peace. Furthermore, counter-terrorism training for security personnel is ongoing, and

anti-terrorism legislation has been drafted and validated and is currently with the Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice for consideration ahead of its promulgation into law. Moreover, in June last year the Anti-Money-Laundering and Combating of Financing of Terrorism law was amended and strengthened to ensure clarity on issues related to the financing of terrorism activities.

The Government is also strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Youth Affairs to provide training and job opportunities for young people in order to counter the threat of terrorism.

Countering terrorism and extremism, especially within the context of peace and security in Africa, should also seek to address the human rights of victims of terrorism. Addressing and promoting the needs of victims of terrorism within the context of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is not only reassuring to victims of terrorism but also represents a significant measure in contributing to peace and security in Africa.

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

Mr. Edrees (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. I wish you and the dear People's Republic of China every success in your tasks. I also thank you for the invitation to participate in this meeting, at which we are discussing one of today's most important issues pertaining to international peace and security, namely, countering terrorism and extremism in Africa. I further commend the tireless efforts undertaken by the Government of China to address the current global health threat, and express solidarity with all countries and peoples facing this challenge with determination and persistence. In addition, I thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo, Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, and Assistant Secretary-General Abdoulaye Mar Dieye for their valuable briefings.

The issue of terrorism and extremism in Africa is a very detailed and complex one. Egypt, as an African State, and given its geographical proximity to the most unstable areas on the continent, has in-depth knowledge of the nature of the terrorist threat and its causes, as well as the means to address it on our beloved African

continent. There is no doubt that the threat of terrorism has reached many parts of the continent, from east to west, in addition to the Sahel, North Africa and Libya. However, there are other areas as well, but to save time I will focus in my statement on two main elements: the terrorist threat in the Sahel and the terrorist threat in Libya. Both threats are closely related. I will also outline Egypt's efforts to address these threats.

With regard to the terrorist threat in the Sahel region, Egypt has closely followed the development of movements that have carried out extremist and terrorist activities in the Sahel for many years. These movements have exploited the economic, social and political circumstances in sisterly nations in order to emerge, recruit youth and terrorize the people with a view to achieving primarily political objectives. The weak institutional context in certain States of the region has allowed some of those terrorist organizations and organized crime groups to emerge, proliferate and gain strength. There are close links between organized-crime groups and terrorist and extremist organizations, whereby they fuel each other. We see terrorist organizations in the Sahel region, for example, benefiting financially from various forms of organized crime, such as the traffic in drugs and human trafficking, by collecting fees from criminal terrorist groups. This helps those groups to increase their capacities and hence the vicious circle between terrorism and crime continues indefinitely.

In this regard, Egypt supports all United Nations and regional efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of terrorism and extremism in the Sahel region. We also support all efforts to achieve security and enforce the law in the States of the region, particularly the efforts of the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force. Egypt is also providing every possible support to the States of the region to increase their capacities to address this threat at many levels, such as by countering extremist thought by sending enlightened religious leaders to promote the real values of religion, or through peacebuilding efforts. Egypt has hosted a workshop focused on the challenges to peacebuilding in the Sahel, and is also host to the African Union Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development, on which we rely heavily in our efforts to build peace in the States of the region and to increase States' capacity to counter terrorism.

Egypt believes in the role of the strong States in countering terrorism through their national institutions, which are capable of imposing and implementing law

and security. Accordingly, Egypt has granted 1,000 training scholarships in recent years to personnel from the Sahel and Saharan States. We also continue to provide specialized training courses for personnel from the States of the region. This is an effort that we hope will be developed in the coming period through assistance from the Sahel-Saharan Anti-Terrorism Center, hosted by Egypt.

In Libya, Egypt believes that the recent terrorist threat requires the international community and the Security Council to take a decisive stance, as it seriously threatens not only United Nations efforts to achieve peace and stability in the countries concerned but also regional and international peace and security. In this regard, Egypt expresses its deep concern at the fact that some States are recruiting and transferring foreign terrorist fighters from Syria to Libya. This is an overt and explicit violation of a number of Security Council resolutions on Libya and counter-terrorism, adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. This violation also undermines efforts to achieve peace in Libya following the Berlin conference.

In that regard, I would like to refer to the hundreds of Da'esh and Al-Qaida terrorist fighters being transferred from Idlib, Syria, to Libya in order to join the armed militias that are active in areas controlled by the reconciliation Government in Libya. They receive direct and overt logistical support and large amounts of money in a manner detailed in my statement to the Council today. It is unbelievable that this blatant violation of international law and Security Council resolutions is taking place openly and before the eyes of all, as stated explicitly in the Security Council's meetings on Libya and as detailed and documented in the twenty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015) (S/2020/53). Some of those terrorists had been transferred earlier to the Sahel States and European countries as well. They will use the same methods to achieve the same objectives, thereby creating long-term problems for the international community. That would further complicate already complex issues.

In that regard, Egypt calls on the Security Council to uphold its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security by ensuring accountability for violations of relevant Security Council resolutions, especially with regard to paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 2396 (2017), on the prevention of the

movement of terrorists and the necessary notifications to make in that regard. Unfortunately, those obligations are not being implemented. No respect is being shown for the Council or its resolutions. Resolutions alone are not enough. Resolutions are not the solution. However, implementation and accountability are necessary.

Egypt notes that the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities has recently included Da'esh of Libya, Da'esh of West Africa and Da'esh of the Greater Sahara in the sanctions list. We stress the importance of the terms outlined in paragraph 3 of resolution 2253 (2015), on the criteria for adding organizations and individuals effectively linked to Da'esh and Al-Qaida on a sanctions list, following coordination with the relevant States. Egypt also takes note of resolution 2462 (2019), on countering the financing of terrorism, as well as resolution 2482 (2019) on the linkage between terrorism and organized crime. We call on the Council to pursue its efforts to enforce its resolutions on combating terrorism, in particular resolution 2396 (2017), on preventing the movement of terrorists and foreign terrorist fighters.

In conclusion, I would like to mention that I am honoured to co-facilitate the seventh review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, together with my friend His Excellency the Ambassador of Spain. The review process is scheduled to hold its first informal consultations with the Member States on 16 March. We hope that, together, we will be able through the current review to reach a new international consensus on the review resolution in a manner commensurate with the terrorist activities that have taken place since the last review in 2018. That consensus would underline the will and determination of the States to decisively counter terrorism with a view to achieving a world that is more stable and secure. That is an important message for the United Nations to send this year, as we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment of our international Organization.

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

Mr. Siddig (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this very important meeting. It is a great pleasure for my delegation to have participated in

this extremely important debate. Our thanks also go to Ms. DiCarlo, Ms. Mohammed and Mr. Dieye for their comprehensive briefings.

For the first time ever in my country, the Prime Minister, Mr. Abdullah Hamdoug, was targeted by a bomb on Monday morning, 9 March. Such an assassination attempt is an extraneous phenomenon to the Sudanese people. The Prime Minister escaped unscathed while he was going to his office, although some members of his convoy were injured. If that cowardly terrorist attack had succeeded, it would have torpedoed security and stability in my country. It goes without saying that instability and insecurity in the Sudan would pose a threat to the stability and security of the broader region and thereby threaten international peace and security. The Sudanese authorities are currently carrying out an investigation to identify the parties operating in the dark that orchestrated and attempted to carry out that ignoble act. Those responsible for it will be prosecuted and held accountable.

My delegation sincerely thanks the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the African Union (AU), the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), along with all sisterly and friendly countries that have condemned that heinous act.

I would like to express our solidarity with the victims of terrorism around the world and also with all the countries that have suffered terrorist attacks. The Sudan reaffirms the vital importance of having in place an effective multilateral regime, in line with international law, with a view to better addressing the multifaceted and correlated challenges and threats that face our world. We also emphasize the main role played by the United Nations, particularly in view of the fact that we live today, more than ever before, in an interconnected and globalized world. No country can live isolated. We therefore recognize that our collective security depends on effective cooperation to withstand transnational challenges.

The Sudan has ratified all international conventions related to counter-terrorism, in addition to regional conventions at the African and Arab levels. My country is working hard within the context of the efforts undertaken by the OIC to counter terrorism. We consider the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy to be one of the most important legal frameworks for

offering guidance to national mechanisms that deal with anti-terrorism laws and legislations.

The war that we are waging against terrorism today is one that we wage first and foremost to defend our humanitarian values and principles, as well as to consolidate human rights, the rule of law and peaceful and prosperous coexistence. The Sudan therefore condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and we emphasize our involvement and cooperation in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy within a comprehensive, sustained and coordinated approach based on the four pillars of the Strategy, with a view to achieving a balanced and comprehensive approach. The primary responsibility for the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is borne by the Member States, while taking into consideration that the United Nations must play an important role in enhancing coordination and consistency at the national, regional and international levels. The United Nations is to provide support to Member States, upon their request, in order to ensure the balanced implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The Sudan was one of the first countries to submit its report on the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, in line with the report of the Secretary-General (A/74/677) on the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. There is a need more than ever before for the Security Council to participate alongside Member States and regional organizations and institutions in efforts to prevent conflict in Africa. The Security Council plays an important role in ongoing coordination and cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, in particular the institutions of the African Union.

Putting an end to conflict throughout Africa will depend on the participation of the parties concerned. Efforts to prevent and end conflict require a unified international position and a commitment to our common goals. The partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security must be strengthened, particularly in light of the fact that the African Union and its institutions are making great efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Those Goals are aimed at addressing poverty and inequality, strengthening State institutions and promoting the principles of human

rights, among others, in line with the mission included in the African Union Agenda 2063.

Our national efforts to counter terrorism and further regional and international cooperation within the context of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy require technical support to build capacities and enable national mechanisms to play their role to the fullest, on the basis of mutual cooperation and respect, without undermining national ownership and sovereignty. That is a joint effort between the State and various civil society organizations, in addition to the media and research and study centres that monitor various phenomena and provide in-depth studies, while leading awareness and enlightening campaigns.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate China, your great country, Mr. President, on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March and to thank it for organizing this debate on terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, two of the main challenges to peace and security on the continent. I would also like to commend Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed and all those who have spoken before me for the quality of their statements and the relevance of their recommendations.

In recent years, the African continent has been confronted with an intensification of the threat of terrorism and violent extremism, which are sowing desolation among civilian populations and undermining the stability and development of States. In that regard, 2019 was one of the most tragic years for West Africa and the Sahel owing to the increase in terrorist attacks, which have resulted in many human casualties and massive internal displacement of persons. Despite the efforts made by African Governments to combat those phenomena, with the support of the international community, terrorist organizations and their fundamentalist ideology continue to thrive in the unfortunately fertile soil of some States' fragility and of recurrent communal conflicts. Similarly, youth unemployment, weak security systems, lack of basic social infrastructure and corruption create an environment conducive to the entrenchment of terrorism and extremism with proven resilience in West Africa and the Sahel, in particular.

In the face of those security hazards, it is important to move from ad hoc solutions to responses based on a multidimensional, better coordinated approach and on strategies that address the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism. Côte d'Ivoire therefore calls for greater mobilization and stronger commitment on the part of the international community to support States in investing in the building of more resilient societies. For their part, those States, which bear the primary responsibility, must respond to the many concerns of their populations by developing policies that take security imperatives and humanitarian and development needs into account.

Prevention is also a priority task in strategies to combat terrorism and violent extremism and should be based on the decisive role that civil society and the media can play. With particular regard to the media, social networks can be used to raise awareness of all forms of violence, to combat radical ideology and rhetoric of terrorist groups and to help spread messages of peace, tolerance and social cohesion. Leveraging education can likewise help to prevent those scourges. Indeed, the idleness of young people and a lack of education make them vulnerable to fundamentalist discourse. Furthermore, the transnational nature of terrorism and violent extremism requires enhanced cooperation among States and at the regional and subregional levels in the fields of security, defence and economic and social development.

In recognition of that need, five West African countries — Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo and Côte d'Ivoire — launched the Accra initiative in September 2017 to respond to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism. The initiative has led to the creation of a platform for the exchange of information and intelligence among the police, gendarmerie and security services of those countries. In the same vein, the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States and the West African Economic and Monetary Union made financial commitments of \$1 billion on 14 September 2019 in Ouagadougou and of \$100 million on 1 December 2019 in Dakar, respectively, to strengthen the capacity to combat terrorism. Furthermore, the imperative of effective regional cooperation has led to the establishment of such organizations as the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and the Lake Chad Basin Commission. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its plea for increased support for the operationalization of

the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel and the Multinational Joint Task Force, as well as for development initiatives in areas affected by terrorism and violent extremism.

In addition to its strong involvement in the subregional initiatives mentioned earlier, Côte d'Ivoire is resolutely committed to fighting terrorism through a strategy focused on prevention, the strengthening of logistical and human resources and the promotion of social cohesion. Thus, with the support of France, an international anti-terrorism academy focused on the region is being established near Abidjan. Intended for the actors in the fight against terrorism, the academy will seek to promote a comprehensive handling of the phenomenon, from intelligence gathering to specialized force operations and judicial procedures. In addition, the Government is introducing various measures to address the social needs of vulnerable populations, particularly in the areas of education and health.

In view of the serious threat posed by terrorism and extremism to peace and security in Africa and the rest of the world, it is important to pool all our logistical, material, financial and intelligence resources. My delegation welcomes the commitment of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, in that regard and calls for the effective implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the relevant Council resolutions. It also calls on the international community to support the Silencing the Guns initiative with a view to ending conflict on the African continent.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its call for a global, coordinated and sustainable strategy for the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism. It also reiterates its plea for the strengthening of States' operational and intelligence capacities and, lastly, urges the Security Council to find a rapid and lasting solution to the Libyan crisis, which would, if not eradicate, then at least improve the state of marked insecurity in Africa.

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

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to express my delegation's deep appreciation to the presidency for organizing this debate and, above all, for choosing the fight against terrorism and extremism in Africa as its theme, which demonstrates the importance that China attaches to Africa, its development and the prosperity of its peoples.

Moreover, the choice is timely. As emphasized by the Secretary-General in his latest report on the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/74/677), terrorism has become one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and to the realization of universal human rights.

That is particularly true for our continent, Africa. In particular in the Sahel, terrorists increasingly attack critical infrastructure and vulnerable targets, such as schools, hospitals and economic facilities, with disastrous consequences, both for the political stability and the socioeconomic development of those countries. Moreover, separatists and non-State armed groups, in particular those with proven links to terrorist groups, pose a genuine threat to peace and security in Africa. Even more worrisome is the recent rapprochement between Al-Qaida and Da'esh in the Sahel. Sworn enemies in the past, they now work together and conduct joint operations.

By spreading fear, hatred and divisions within communities, today's terrorists aim to incite violence and create a vacuum they hope to then exploit. That is why it is imperative to address the root causes that drive people to join terrorists. Aware of the impact of the proliferation of transnational threats linked to terrorism on security and stability, Morocco is resolutely committed to promoting a comprehensive and coherent approach to the scourge that covers, in a complementary and integrated manner, security and military dimensions, the achievement of economic and human development, the safeguarding of cultural and religious identity and international and regional cooperation.

Morocco's approach is in line with the guidelines of the African policy, as set out by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, which advocates the emergence of a new model of South-South cooperation that is both effective and supportive. That approach seeks to strengthen resilience in the light of the complex and multidimensional nature of the challenges faced by the continent. Lastly, it is based on principles and values, thereby making continental and interregional integration and solidarity key factors in responding to the changes occurring on our African continent. To that end, Morocco has always strongly advocated for economic and human development on the African continent. That dimension is crucial to ensuring that

stability on the continent is irreversible and that peace is sustainable.

It is in that context that Morocco has made the prudent choice to promote and invest, with strength and conviction, in tangible and concrete projects for the benefit of several brotherly African countries. Those projects, which are structural in nature, aim to target the most disadvantaged populations with an inclusive and participatory approach. They include the launch of several public-private partnerships and considerable investments in areas as diverse as financing, banking, insurance, telecommunications, infrastructure, mining, city planning, low-income housing and so on.

In addition to socioeconomic development, Morocco has always advocated the preservation of the cultural and religious identity of African citizens. That lever is essential for countering the shameless and reprehensible use of the authentic spiritual frame of reference that fuels and unduly justifies the violent manifestations of extremism and the spread of obscurantism. Under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Commander of the Faithful, Morocco has invested in protecting and promoting moderate, tolerant and open Islam, which has been historically prevalent in the region. In that regard, the Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams, Morchidines and Morchidates has trained 1,754 Imams from several African countries. In addition, the Kingdom of Morocco established the Mohammed VI Foundation for African Ulema, whose main objective is to unify and coordinate the efforts of Muslim ulemas in African States to promote, spread and consolidate the values of tolerance, which are enshrined in and promoted by Islam.

The threat of terrorism is multifaceted, evolving and enduring. To address it, we must focus on building peaceful, inclusive and prosperous societies based on the rule of law, human rights, good governance and sustainable development. Resolute and proportionate responses to terrorist threats are also essential, but they must be complemented by medium- and long-term investments in prevention and resilience-building. In line with that approach, States need strong institutions, effective governance and respect for human rights to deny terrorists and their criminal supporters the scope they need to carry out their activities and to bring them to justice.

Lastly, special attention must be paid to regional and international cooperation in the fight against

terrorism, as well as to information-sharing and the exchange of good practices.

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

Mr. Amde (Ethiopia): Let me begin by warmly congratulating you, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. We also appreciate your thoughtful invitation to hear from African voices on today's very important topic.

We thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Ambassador Fatima Mohammed and Mr. Abdoulaye Dieye for their insightful briefings.

We welcome the adoption earlier today of presidential statement S/PRST/2020/5, on the issue of countering terrorism and extremism in Africa.

Terrorism is a global menace. Terrorists continue to adapt their tactics, generate financing, wreak havoc and retain considerable sway across national boundaries. May I take this opportunity to denounce, in the strongest terms, the assassination attempt on the Prime Minister of the Sudan. We express our solidarity with the people and the Government of the Sudan.

The enormous challenges we face in the fight against terrorism should compel us to forge meaningful international cooperation to counter and prevent violent extremism. However, it is important to note that the root causes of radicalization and extremism are very much local. Terrorists thrive where there is social exclusion and socioeconomic marginalization of minorities and disadvantaged groups, and where State authority is either weak or inexistent.

The rise of intolerant speech and hate-filled narratives, disseminated through the Internet and social media, also contribute to increasing social and political polarization, at times leading to communal conflicts. Unless we deal with those and other underlying causes, our efforts will always come up short. Accordingly, our strategies and efforts to combat terrorism and extremism must be holistic and comprehensive. Those efforts should be deployed in tandem with proactive steps to promote socioeconomic development, especially employment for youths, as well as effective poverty reduction and intercommunal violence-prevention strategies.

Young people are often portrayed as the unfortunate victims or perpetrators of terrorism. However, as we have seen across Africa, young people are at the forefront of demanding change and better opportunities. They are our strongest partners in socioeconomic development. We must listen to their hopes and worries about the future. Most important, we must ensure that women and youth are actively and meaningfully involved in decision-making at all levels of society.

The Security Council has continually emphasized the need for the full implementation of international legal frameworks and sanctions regimes by all Member States. That is indeed vital for the strengthening of global cooperation. However, it is equally important that stakeholders recognize that developing countries continue to face huge difficulties in properly implementing those legal frameworks. We believe that tangible capacity-building and technical assistance are needed for the effective implementation of international legal frameworks and to help Member States stay one step ahead in countering the ever-evolving terrorist threat.

The rise of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa continues to cause enormous loss of life and widespread destruction. The United Nations should continue to reinforce its partnership with the African Union (AU) and other regional and subregional organizations through dialogue, technical support and joint activities to respond to terrorist threats. The United Nations-AU partnership on the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 — one of the flagship projects under Agenda 2063 — must be further strengthened and expanded to other areas in line with all the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Climate change is further exacerbating competition over increasingly scarce resources, leading to communal conflicts and creating opportunities for terrorists to exploit. The effects of both terrorism and climate change transcend national boundaries. We need robust inter-State cooperation to deny the merchants of terrorism safe havens. Stronger regional cooperation is needed in the areas of information- and intelligence-sharing and mechanisms for joint-border management. Such cooperation could also take the form of regional economic integration, the development of joint infrastructure projects and investment corridors.

The Horn of Africa has turned a page for the better. Countries in the region are engaged in robust cooperation

to consolidate peace and promote economic and social development, including through a comprehensive plan to combat and neutralize terrorism and other common threats they face, such as arms and human trafficking and drug smuggling. The international community must encourage and support those efforts.

Al-Shabaab continues to inflict destruction in Somalia and remains a serious threat to the wider region. It continues to possess a significant capacity to raise revenue and conduct lethal attacks. To eliminate that threat once and for all, we must continue to support the African Union Mission in Somalia, invest in strengthening the capacity of the Somali National Army and redouble our support for the Government of Somalia in this pivotal election year.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development is coordinating a regional response to the threat of terrorism through its comprehensive regional strategy, in line with the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. International partners should reinforce their efforts through technical support and capacity-building, including in areas involving strategic communications.

Finally, Ethiopia is currently engaged in considerable legal, economic and political reforms. A number of repressive laws, such as the charities and societies proclamation, the anti-terrorism law, the national election law and the mass media proclamation, have been revised and fundamentally amended to close gaps in the implementation of counter-terrorism measures. Measures have also been taken towards establishing a system of accountability for serious human rights abuses and accelerating the reform of the criminal justice system and the security service to make them independent of political control and influence.

We understand that we must not remain complacent as a result of our modest successes. My Government is committed to building a just and equal system of governance that genuinely upholds the rights of citizens and ensures that the benefits of economic development are equally shared by all of our citizens.

Let me take this opportunity to underline Ethiopia's commitment to multilateralism, counter-terrorism collaboration and regional partnerships to address the structural root causes of extremism and terrorism.

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

Mr. Doualeh (Djibouti) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I join the representatives who spoke before me in congratulating the delegation of the People's Republic of China on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. Djibouti is grateful for the holding of this important debate and the excellent concept note (S/2020/161, annex). Our thanks go to Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Ambassador Fatima Kyari Mohammed and Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye for their briefings.

Djibouti reiterates in the strongest of terms its condemnation of the assassination attempt on the person of the Prime Minister of the Sudan, Mr. Abdalla Adam Hamdok.

The scourge of terrorist and extremist groups in Africa has been growing steadily since the early 1990s. The continent is in particular extremely concerned about the escalation of terrorist acts. The year 2019 was particularly deadly, with an alarming number of victims who fell victim to terrorists' bullets. To date, we do not have reliable statistics, but only estimates. We would benefit from a statistical analysis of the attack patterns of terrorist groups, the nature of the terrorist groups concerned and the responses that have been used so far, based on innovative analytical strategies.

The thirty-third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa on 9 and 10 February, declared 2020 as the year during which the continent would commit to silencing the guns. There have been positive developments in that regard, the most recent of which hail from South Sudan, where the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity was just formed in line with the deadlines decided by the various Southern Sudanese stakeholders.

However, the terrorist threat constitutes the greatest threat to the implementation of the continental strategy, as it calls into question the encouraging progress made in the areas of crisis and conflict management. Of even greater concern, the ever-increasing flow of foreign terrorist fighters coming from other regions of the world to bolster small groups already on the African continent has enabled the latter to strengthen their capacity to adapt and change, as well as diversify their sources of funding.

African forces deployed on the ground are faced with fighting an asymmetrical war against non-State actors that are enjoying an increasing amount of resources. We are urgently in need of finding appropriate solutions

to the untenable situation involving underequipped African peacekeeping forces, which nevertheless must ensure control and security of vast swaths of territory. The exponential increase in those groups' use of improvised explosive devices, mass casualty terrorism and targeted assassinations should also be highlighted.

Faced with that situation, the thirty-third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union endorsed a landmark decision emanating from the recommendation of the African Union Peace and Security Council under the presidency of the Djibouti for the month of February. The Heads of State decided to deploy, in cooperation with the Ministers of Defence of the Group of Five for the Sahel, an African operational force made up of 3,000 soldiers in the Sahel region.

Africa has concerted its efforts and is committed to jointly responding to the terrorist groups in order to destroy them once and for all. Africa, however, is asking for the full and unequivocal support of the international community, in particular the members of the Security Council. Allow me to therefore take this opportunity to call once again, on behalf of the African Union Peace and Security Council, in accordance with its mandate, for the taking of new measures commensurate with the seriousness of the threat in the Sahel region and the Lake Chad basin.

Beginning in the 1990s, the region of East Africa, in which my country is located, was one of the first to suffer the unbridled ideological onslaught and attacks perpetrated by extremist and terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaida and Al-Shabaab, which have now pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. In having understood the dimensions of the lethal role played by groups that promote extremist ideologies, the Republic of Djibouti, since the early 2000s, has contributed to regional, continental and international efforts to combat the scourge of terrorism and maritime piracy in the Gulf of Aden.

In order to deal with this ever-evolving threat, the Djibouti authorities have continued to ensure maintaining the highest degree of vigilance based on a three-part dynamic involving a theological dialogue to promote the dissemination of religious ideals as a shield against extremist speech; massive investment in priority social sectors; and, lastly, the strengthening of the arsenal of legal tools and preventive mechanisms. Accordingly, the need to be able to constantly adapt and the high level of vigilance that this urgent

challenge requires calls for substantial financial and technological resources.

In order to eradicate terrorism and extremist groups, we believe that developing countries, particularly African countries, should benefit more from sustainable financial support and a suitable level of technology transfer. We propose four courses of action.

First, we call for the fulfilment of development aid commitments to meaningfully meet the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, as the first victims of terrorist and extremist groups' ideological indoctrination are often those who are intellectually or socially vulnerable and exploited in order to serve the sinister plans of terrorist groups.

Young people continue to be a primary target. It is no coincidence that the main terrorist group in Somalia is called Al-Shabaab, which means "the youth" in Arabic. In the war against terrorism, sharing experiences, coordination and response are the key elements for which we must take joint political decisions.

It would therefore be fitting to consider opening an outpost of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism at African Union headquarters. Finally, it is essential to ensure predictable funding for peacekeeping operations.

In conclusion, if we are not careful, the African continent could become a revolving door for transnational terrorism. This threat, which affects us all at the highest level, is becoming increasingly complex, dynamic and structured, and is ever-changing. It is only through better organization that we will be able to launch a sustainable and effective response. That is why we must mount a coordinated response. Time is against us and there is a lot at stake.

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

Ms. Kaba (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I would like to congratulate the People's Republic of China on its presidency of the Security Council and to express our appreciation for the choice of the theme of this meeting on combating terrorism and extremism in Africa, which is a topical issue. I also wish to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ambassador Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, and Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye,

Special Adviser to the United Nations Development Programme Administrator.

Terrorism today is emerging as a global phenomenon that challenges the sovereign efforts of States to defend the territory and the property of their citizens. Terrorism is not a new phenomenon in Africa. It has gradually taken hold on the continent, which is plagued by destructive conflicts, climate change and endemic poverty. Terrorist activities thrive and spread in that environment, undermining the efforts of States to promote peace and security.

Africa has been ineffectively facing the challenges of terrorism and violent extremism for many years due to their multiple and complex causes and the constantly evolving strategies of terrorist groups in transnational spaces. The activities carried out by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb organization, Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin and the various terrorist groups operating in northern Mali and Central Africa compel us to find adequate strategies to combat the phenomenon at the international level.

The number of civilian and military victims of terrorist activities in Africa is estimated in the thousands. In addition, millions have been displaced and State services do not extend to affected areas. This situation significantly undermines development efforts and forces States to allocate a substantial part of their budgets to security, to the detriment of their economic and social development.

It is regrettable to note that, in the face of the tragic events in Africa and worldwide, with their attendant loss of human life, destruction of infrastructure, proliferation of organized crime and drug trafficking and massive displacement of populations, the international community is struggling to find a consensual definition of terrorism and an appropriate response to it. That is one of the obstacles to the implementation of a comprehensive and effective strategy to combat the scourge. Security challenges related to the activities of terrorist groups, organized crime, piracy and communal violence threaten security and stability in Africa.

Given the scale and complexity of the terrorist groups operating in Africa, it is high time for the Security Council to pay due attention to combating terrorism in Africa. The African continent is facing major socioeconomic and security challenges. In that context, it is necessary to assess the counter-terrorism

efforts undertaken within the framework of the African Union and to propose solutions to bolster its fight against terrorism.

In that regard, my delegation believes that counter-terrorism efforts in Africa should focus on a number of measures, in particular: the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts, the urgent settlement of ongoing conflicts within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture, and the effective implementation of the relevant instruments on democracy and governance — because the effective entrenchment of the values and principles of democracy and respect for human rights is a safe response to the conflicts that are shaking Africa. In addition, Africa needs enhanced cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations because the cross-border nature, complexity and scale of the threat require new approaches to combat terrorism and violent extremism. Moreover, Africa must enhance the capabilities of African armed forces through training and equipment, freezing the assets and sources of financing for terrorist activities on the continent and sharing relevant information. In that connection, Guinea welcomes the establishment of the African Police Cooperation Organization.

Africa must also enhance its border control and procedures for identifying foreign terrorist fighters. We must leverage new information technologies in the fight against the scourge. We must fight against endemic poverty in Africa by mobilizing the necessary resources for the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development worldwide. Africa must also focus on strengthening subregional, regional and international cooperation, combating the illicit trade of and trafficking in small arms and light weapons as one of the priorities of the African Union's strategy, and implementing its Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative.

Aware of the risk of the spread of terrorism in our subregion, Guinea has taken the following national measures — the establishment, in 2007, of a national committee to review financial information in order to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, the adoption of Law L-2019-033, on the prevention and repression of terrorism, enacted on 4 July 2019 by the President of the Republic, and of policies to

raise awareness about terrorism and hate speech, in partnership with civil society, religious leaders, women and young people.

My country also stresses the need to support international counter-terrorism forces — particularly the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram and the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force — and to strengthen the strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in the fight against terrorism. All those measures must be taken in the framework of the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. The actions taken by Secretary-General Guterres, specialized bodies and partners for an effective coordinated implementation of those resolutions and the Global Counter-terrorism Strategy are a source of hope in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism in Africa.

The establishment of the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel to help 10 countries, including Guinea, is an innovative approach by the Secretary-General. It aims to establish a close link between the issues of peace, security and climate change and those of socioeconomic development. This new approach to the issues of peace, security and development will contribute to the fight against extreme poverty, inequality and the perverse effects of climate change, all of which are foster breeding grounds for terrorism.

That is why the President of the Republic of Guinea, Mr. Alpha Condé, has stated that it is through economic development, respect for human rights, social justice and the improvement of the living conditions for young people and women that terrorism will be definitively defeated.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There are still a number of speakers remaining on the list of speakers for this meeting. I will make sure that they have an opportunity to deliver their statements in the afternoon meeting. I would also like to reassure everyone that the statements made in the afternoon meeting will be as important as the ones made this morning, and that they will be considered on a par with this morning's statements in the follow-up actions of the Security Council.

The meeting was suspended at 1.10 p.m.