



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

Provisional

9299th

meeting

Thursday, 30 March 2023, 3 p.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Fernandes	(Mozambique)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Spasse
	Brazil	Ms. Jornada
	China	Mr. Xu Yuanzhou
	Ecuador	Mr. Gross Pozo
	France	Mr. Murugasu
	Gabon	Mrs. Kambangoye Ankassa
	Ghana	Mrs. Corquaye
	Japan	Mr. Tamaura
	Malta	Ms. Cassar
	Russian Federation	Mr. Chumakov
	Switzerland	Mr. Hauri
	United Arab Emirates	Ms. Alshamsi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Brady
	United States of America	Ms. Cameron

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

The impact of development policies in the implementation of the Silencing the Guns initiative

Letter dated 24 February 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2023/148/Rev.1)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room AB-0601 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

23-09061 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



The meeting was resumed at 3.05 p.m.

The President: I would like to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Flashing lights on the collar of the microphone will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after three minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): We fully agree with your analysis, Mr. President, that a greater focus on socioeconomic factors is key to conflict prevention, and that, in doing so, we must take into consideration the political history of the continent. Today we would like to highlight the importance of inclusive and, where appropriate, decentralized governance in conflict prevention.

The artificial imposition of borders has left one of colonialism's most problematic and complex legacies. The policies that led to those borders were driven by geostrategic interests, without any interest in the diverse identities and aspirations of those living within them. The viability of any future State was at best an afterthought. Furthermore, centralized mechanisms of governance created in order to facilitate the exploitation of colonial possessions made it more difficult for post-colonial States to institute sustainable forms of self-governance. The decision of the Organization of African Unity to set out in its Constitutive Act the principle of respect of borders existing on achievement of independence undoubtedly spared the continent the bloodshed of secessionist conflicts. But it also confronted newly independent States with complex questions on the relationship between social diversity and peace and stability.

The link between diversity and peace is an understudied but vital one for ensuring sustainable peace. In addressing such questions, the relevant United Nations entities should encourage States to uphold the human rights of minority communities as a means of enhancing conflict prevention. Many conflicts have their roots in the inequitable exclusion of minority communities from power, opportunity, services and security — inequalities that were designed during colonial times. By upholding the human rights of minorities, it is possible to spur development and prevent conflict today. The recent report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues on the link between

conflict prevention and the protection of the human rights of minorities (A/HRC/49/46) is an important contribution to this conversation.

Relevant conversations within United Nations bodies, including the Peacebuilding Commission, should also consider the positive effects of internal governance arrangements that meet the aspirations of relevant communities and international human rights standards. Forms of self-governance, decentralization and the devolution of powers contribute to upholding Sustainable Development Goal 16 and, as the United Nations-World Bank *Pathways for Peace* report notes, have proven effective in many cases in reducing local violent conflict. By meaningfully devolving power, we deprive marginalized communities of the grievances that would otherwise help armed groups grow in power and influence to challenge peaceful forms of governance.

Together with academic partners at the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination, Liechtenstein has for many years explored the possibilities of decentralization and devolution for relevant communities within States, often referred to as “internal forms of self-determination”. To that end, we have produced the *Handbook on the Prevention and Resolution of Self-Determination Conflicts*, which sets out a range of practices for States, mediators and others, as well as case studies of relevant conflicts and peace processes. It highlights the importance of governance structures that uphold the human rights of minorities and discusses how power can be exercised locally as a measure to prevent conflict and to end it in sustainable ways. We look forward to follow-up discussions to today's important debate.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Lagdameo (Philippines): We thank Mozambique for convening and chairing this important open debate.

A conflict-free world is a dream we all share — a dream we all want to realize. We join today's open debate to reiterate, in the context of Africa, the strong support of the Philippines for that dream, Silencing the Guns, for a peaceful, stable and conflict-free Africa, to rid the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts and to prevent genocide.

We are pleased to note that the economic forecasts for Africa are good. Addressing conflict is indeed a means to fuel economic transformation, especially after the pandemic. According to the African Development Bank, African economies remain resilient, with a stable outlook in 2023 and 2024, despite the tightening global financial conditions. The Bank estimates that Africa's average gross domestic product will stabilize at 4 per cent in the next two years, up from 3.8 per cent in 2022, adding that the continent could benefit from high demand for its commodities, as countries seek alternatives for food and energy.

The challenges related to achieving a conflict-free and progressive Africa are enormous and complex. We therefore laud the ongoing efforts by the African Union (AU), in partnership with the United Nations and the international community, for a conflict-free Africa to strengthen democratic institutions as building blocks to promote peace and stability and enhance sustainable economic development.

We commend the AU's determination to transform Africa with its visionary Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want into an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena. Realizing the aspiration of a conflict-free Africa lies in the AU, its member States and their people and institutions.

We also appreciate the strong support of the United Nations for the AU's Silencing the Guns initiative, through resolution 2457 (2019), which welcomed the AU's determination to rid Africa of conflicts and create conditions that are favourable to the growth, development and integration of the continent. We recognize the important contribution by the United Nations of its wide-ranging political, technical and logistical support for the AU's mediation and peace agreement implementation efforts in the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, South Sudan and the Sudan. We also note the coordinated efforts of the United Nations and the AU to address instability in Somalia. We note that half of the dozen United Nations peacekeeping missions around the world are in Africa — in Abyei, an area contested by the Sudan and South Sudan, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei; in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic

Republic of the Congo; in Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali; in South Sudan, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan; and in Western Sahara, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara.

Normalization is a crucial component of Agenda 2063 and the Silencing the Guns initiative. In the Philippines, normalization is an important factor for the peace and development process in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, in the southern Philippines. It aims to achieve a smooth transition for the members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces to become productive members of society, through the provision of socioeconomic development programmes and other peace dividends. The Philippines believes that sustainable people-centred peace and security can be achieved only when the basic needs and aspirations of all individuals, including those in conflict-affected areas, are met. The Philippines is ready to exchange with the AU its best practices on normalization, based on its experience in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, including the Moro Islamic Liberation Front graduated programme for the decommissioning of its forces, so that they are put to further use. Normalization, including decommissioning, contributes to enhancing security and stability in the region by reducing the proliferation of illicit weapons and preventing potential spoilers from undermining the peace process. However, normalization also faces many challenges, such as delays due to the coronavirus disease, the insufficient delivery of promised assistance to members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces, the lack of trust among rival groups and the gendered impacts of climate change.

We are pleased to note that, in the 60 years of the peacekeeping tradition of the Philippines, we have sustained our commitment to peace, including by contributing to the cause of peace in Africa. Since we first sent our peacekeepers to the Congo in 1963, Filipino peacekeepers have also served in Abyei, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Darfur, Liberia, South Sudan and the Sudan. Today a modest number of Filipino peacekeepers serves with United Nations missions in the Central African Republic and South Sudan. We are committed to increasing the Philippine footprint in United Nations peacekeeping operations with the increased participation of women. It is a commitment on which we plan to deliver as part of our contribution towards realizing a conflict-free Africa. I would like

to conclude by emphasizing that the Philippines will always be a partner of Africa for people-centred peace and development.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand): First of all, we commend Mozambique, as President of the Security Council, for organizing today's timely open debate on this important issue.

The Silencing the Guns initiative is just one important example of the achievements of the African Union (AU), which remains a leading example of a regional organization that has successfully promoted regional approaches to addressing peace, security and other challenges within the continent. In that connection, Thailand wishes to congratulate the African Union, which will be celebrating its sixtieth anniversary this coming May. This initiative is reflective of an important, common-sense but often understated axiom, which is that, for matters related to Africa, it is Africa that knows best how to address them. And flowing from that is the bigger picture — the firm belief that each region, with its unique historical and cultural contexts, is best placed and best informed on how to best address the challenges of that particular region. For it has long been Thailand's view that regional ownership is the key to generating a long-term, sustainable solution to regional problems.

One must also underscore that the international community also has a supportive role to play, which is to provide the necessary advice, when sought, and the necessary support, when requested, by the affected region. And if mutually agreed to by all sides concerned, it is often partnerships involving States of the region and regional organizations, on the one hand, and States outside the region and international organizations, such as the United Nations, on the other, that help lay the foundation and generate momentum for sustainable solutions. It is within that context that Thailand wishes to make the following four points with regard to the theme "Peace and security in Africa: the impact of development policies in the implementation of the Silencing the Guns initiative".

First, Thailand welcomes the Silencing the Guns by 2030 initiative and the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps on the matter, both of which were welcomed by the Security Council in its resolution 2457 (2019). We support the fact that the initiative is

African-owned and African-driven and pursues a comprehensive approach seeking to achieve durable peace and security in Africa, for Africans.

Secondly, Thailand believes that a good understanding of the peace-sustainable development-human security nexus is important for overcoming challenges in any region, including in Africa — from having effective political institutions to promoting sustainable development; from having good governance to strengthening resilience and unity in societies; and from promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms to ensuring respect for diversity and tolerance. All those factors contribute to engendering conditions that are conducive to sustainable peace and security. Without progress in the fight against hunger, poverty and disease, there is less chance for enduring peace and for the guns to be silent.

Thirdly, addressing the needs of the people through people empowerment — economic, social and political — is key to achieving sustainable solutions, via education and skills development, better access to financing and health care and enhanced participation in decision-making at the local, subregional and national levels. The empowerment of people makes it more likely for the intertwined processes of peace, sustainable development and human security to endure, whether at the community or the national level. It is for that reason that Thailand, either through the Thailand International Cooperation Agency or through its peacekeepers in United Nations missions, such as in South Sudan, integrates people-centred technical cooperation and capacity-building in its programmes with African countries. And those programmes are always driven by the needs of the local community, such as in the areas of agriculture, water and land management, because it is what they want, not what we want, which is as it should be.

Fourthly and lastly, a strong regional, multilateral interface, complementing national efforts in addressing peace and security challenges, will be helpful. The AU-United Nations partnership has proven to be a successful example, as are international cooperation in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and international partnerships in support of subregional organizations in Africa. More could be done at the United Nations to enhance coordination in the Organization between such key bodies as the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, the Economic and Social Council and the General

Assembly, for example, and with other organizations such as international financial institutions when needed.

In conclusion, Thailand believes that international support for the Silencing the Guns initiative and partnerships with the African Union and various initiatives from Africa should be continued and indeed reinforced in order to help secure sustainable solutions to peace, security and other challenges within Africa.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): Poland welcomes Mozambique's proposal to hold an open debate on the impact of development policies in the implementation of the Silencing the Guns initiative.

Our discussion today brings us all to reflect upon concrete measures that need to be taken in order to achieve the noble goal of bringing various African conflicts to an end, so as to make a substantial difference in the lives of ordinary people across the continent. With this in mind, I would like to underscore five central points.

First, we need to get back on track to meeting the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. These two complementary and mutually reinforcing blueprints provide the only realistic way of addressing the root causes of conflicts. The study presented at the African Union summit last month found that Africa must sustain annual growth rates of at least 7 to 10 per cent if sustainable development is to be achieved. This means that we urgently need to come up with novel approaches to double the current numbers. The Sustainable Development Goal Summit, to be held in September this year, will present a unique opportunity to give renewed impetus and demonstrate our collective commitment in this regard.

Secondly, we need to build resilience. We note with concern that in recent years the global environment has changed dramatically. Existing vulnerabilities have only increased, while new challenges have emerged, especially in Africa. Poland believes that one way to bring more stability is to enhance resilient connectivity and restore trust in multilateralism and international partnerships.

To that end, we have proposed a General Assembly resolution entitled "Building global resilience and promoting sustainable development through regional and interregional infrastructure connectivity"

(A/77/L.59), which is scheduled for adoption by consensus in the coming weeks. In order to ensure a better response to potential future shocks, it is crucial to invest in quality and resilient infrastructure and to support the capacity-building of developing countries in their efforts to address the ongoing challenges of various kind, especially in the areas of global health, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction, as well as climate change.

The need for a long-term support to reduce vulnerabilities of developing countries to external crises, like food, energy and climate, was stressed by the President of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Duda, in his statement at the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, in Doha just a few weeks ago.

Thirdly, we must address climate-related security risks. The African continent is arguably the region of the world most vulnerable to the detrimental impacts of climate change. There can be no realization of a conflict-free Africa without acknowledging the undeniable link between climate, peace and security.

Last week we had the opportunity to participate in the first United Nations Water Conference in almost five decades, where we could hear first-hand about such water stress and hazards as droughts and floods. The competition over scarce natural resources is arguably one of the drivers of conflicts, intercommunal violence and food insecurity. We call on the Security Council to recognize and properly assess the security implications of climate change. Only then will we be able to truly address the problem of the scarcity of resources from a conflict-prevention perspective.

Fourthly, the significance of the triple-nexus approach — strengthening the interlinkages between the humanitarian, development and peace aspects in building peace and responding to climate-related threats. As peace and development are closely connected, building effective resilience to natural and human-made disruptions is of paramount importance. It is obvious, but still worth mentioning: without sustainable development, there can be no peace, and vice versa, without peace, there can be no development.

Finally, we must build State capacities. In that regard, we would like to stress the importance of strengthening State institutions and governance structures, upholding the rule of law and promoting dialogue between local communities. We also wish

to emphasize the need to prevent non-State actors, including terrorists, organized-crime groups and private mercenaries, from bypassing conventional State supervision and spreading their influence. Strong State institutions that are capable of providing basic social services, protecting national borders, delivering justice and controlling arms flows should be seen as a prerequisite for bringing back stability and safeguarding long-term development.

In conclusion, allow me to reassure the Security Council that Poland will remain committed to supporting peace and security in Africa. Progress in the implementation of the Silencing the Guns initiative remains the essential condition for ensuring equitable and inclusive development. This in turn will move us closer towards a peaceful and secure world, in a future we all want.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Ochoa Martínez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mozambique for convening today's open debate.

For Mexico, it is especially important that the Security Council continues to analyse the negative consequences of the trafficking and diversion of small arms and light weapons. These weapons fuel armed conflicts and organized crime. They exacerbate waves of violence around the world, destroy the social fabric and undermine peace, security and development. We regret that Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean are the two regions that suffer most from this scourge, with the highest rates of violence and deaths from these weapons, despite the fact that the main producers of these weapons are not located in those regions and do not always seem willing to assume their share of responsibility.

Mexico recognizes the progress achieved through the Silencing the Guns initiative as a key element in the African continent's quest to eradicate armed conflict. We applaud the fact that this initiative will be extended until 2030 and will remain one of the pillars of the African Union's Agenda 2063. The Security Council has much to do in support of this and similar initiatives. Addressing the challenges associated with such weapons requires greater commitment from all actors, including the industry that manufactures them, which also engages in negligent practices. Greater regulation of these weapons is required to prevent their being

illegally trafficked, thus making it possible to address the phenomenon in a comprehensive manner that takes into account the entire life cycle of the weapons and their ammunition and, of course, to promote actions in all relevant forums.

We must keep in mind that the Security Council adopted two historic resolutions on the matter: resolution 2220 (2015) and, more recently, resolution 2616 (2021), promoted by Mexico. The latter places special emphasis on the respect that arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council deserve. Violating the provisions of the embargoes translates into more weapons available in conflict situations with which the Council has to deal. In other words, these weapons are the tools for maintaining conflict.

These situations are not unique to the African continent; we need only look to Haiti, which is facing just this type of critical situation. For this reason, in October 2022, Mexico co-sponsored an initiative to prevent the supply of arms to the actors responsible for the violence in Haiti, which the Council adopted as resolution 2653 (2022). Both that resolution and resolution 2616 (2021) highlight the need to promote regional cooperation by land, sea and air to address arms trafficking and diversion.

We reiterate that it is the responsibility of all States, but especially of producer States, to strengthen existing international frameworks on arms control, if we really want to advance the common goal of having societies that are free of violence. Without these frameworks, no development is possible.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to sincerely express my thanks and appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to Mozambique for convening this important meeting. I also congratulate you for assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month.

The Silencing the Guns initiative embodies a practical application of the principle of African solutions to African problems. It represents a tireless African effort to establish peace and security in the continent and reflects awareness by African States about the importance of establishing stability, peace and security in order to create conditions conducive to achieving economic development, implementing the Agenda

2063 of the African Union (AU) and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The initiative will ensure that the African peoples that long suffered from conflicts to benefit from Africa's wealth and tremendous resources. The Silencing the Guns initiative is also the cornerstone of the AU's Peace and Security Architecture.

In that regard, I would like to refer to some Egyptian efforts to implement the initiative and achieve security and stability in the continent.

First, Egypt has supported the initiative since it was launched, in 2013, and has supported extending its implementation until 2030. We took practical steps at the institutional level; most important, the proposal to establish an institutional unit to support mediation and conflict prevention within the AU. Egypt also contributed to promoting the foundations of peace in the continent through its membership of the AU Peace and Security Council for four times since its inception, and we seek membership for the fifth time for the period 2024 to 2026.

Secondly, during its presidency of the AU in 2019, Egypt announced the annual convening of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development to discuss the close relation between achieving security and stability, on one hand, and sustainable development, on the other, including discussing the root causes of conflicts based on the principle of African solutions to African problems. Given that Egypt is keen to support efforts to achieve stability in Africa, President Al-Sisi is overseeing the post-conflict reconstruction dossier within the AU, as well as the peacebuilding dossier. Egypt also hosts the African Union Centre for Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development, as well as the Sahel-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Centre.

Thirdly, during its chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission for the period 2020 to 2021, Egypt paid great attention to peacebuilding efforts in Africa and mobilized support to address the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and recovery in countries on the Commission's agenda, as well as promoting the Commission's role in the Security Council and the General Assembly, particularly regarding African issues. We also expanded the scope of African countries that are addressed by the Commission to include regions that were not addressed before, such as Gulf of Guinea, in addition to promoting the role of women and youth in peacebuilding in Africa.

Our African continent faces many multidimensional challenges, as we are living in a complex world and rapidly changing political reality. Many African countries have not yet fully recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, they have to deal with the new situation following the war in Ukraine and the war's impact on their food security. Furthermore, Africa is also facing challenges related to terrorism, illegal trafficking in natural resources, climate change and other causes of conflict, as was mentioned by other speakers. The international community must make more efforts to support Africa to achieve peace and security in the continent as per the Silencing of Guns initiative.

I would like to mention some of measures proposed by Egypt.

First, we need to enhance cooperation and coordination between the United Nations Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council concerning African issues, particularly those related to United Nations missions in Africa. That will benefit the Security Council from the experiences of the Peace and Security Council in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, in addition to ensuring that the Security Council can adopt resolutions based on accurate assessments of the situation on the ground.

Secondly, we need to consider once again the issue of funding African peace missions through United Nations assessed contributions to support their tasks and responsibilities and provide sustained funding for such missions.

Thirdly, in the light of the multiple issues related to Africa on the Security Council's agenda, the Council should develop its mechanisms and working methods so as to allow African country missions to play a greater role when it comes to African issues that are on its agenda. Consultations must intensely take place with such missions to understand their concerns about draft resolutions to be adopted that greatly affect them. The Council must be more interactive with African countries, while penholders must constantly consult with African missions in relation to African issues across the board.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Let me first thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this highly important debate, which has been enhanced by

the participation of His Excellency Mr. Filipe Nyusi, President of the brotherly Republic of Mozambique.

The joint African Union (AU)-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the joint United Nations-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security represent a solid basis for cooperation between the two organizations, which can effectively silence the guns in Africa over the long term.

In the same context, the African Union's Silencing the Guns initiative lists actions and objectives in order to put an end to conflicts in Africa. The Kingdom of Morocco is convinced that the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative represents a strategic framework for stability, the peaceful settlement of disputes and development on the continent.

Morocco, which is currently a member of the AU Peace and Security Council, remains convinced that there can be no security without development and no development without security. In that context, my country focuses its actions on the three pillars of peace, security and development to ensure the prevention and, more important, the management of conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction. Allow me to mention some of my country's actions and initiatives in that regard.

First, Morocco hosted the first AU Policy Conference on Promoting the Peace, Security and Development Nexus in Tangier from 25 to 27 October 2022, which allowed for a ground-breaking debate to be held on the challenges that still plague Africa's path towards development, particularly food, health and security challenges.

Second, in the context of AU capacity-building in the area of political governance and democratic practices, in collaboration with the African Union Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, the Kingdom of Morocco organized the first specialized training workshop for AU short-term election observers in June 2022.

Third, convinced of the need to support women's participation in peace processes, during its chairmanship of the Peace and Security Council in October 2022, the Kingdom of Morocco organized a commemorative meeting on the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. On that occasion, the Peace and Security Council stressed

the importance of women's effective and meaningful participation in peace processes, including with regard to early-warning and conflict prevention.

Fourth, the Kingdom of Morocco presented its national report for the year 2022 on progress made in implementing the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2030. The report documents my country's achievements and progress in the various priority areas of the Roadmap's monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

Fifth, aware that there can be no peace without development or development without peace, in accordance with the noble directives of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Kingdom of Morocco made the development of our continent a priority of its foreign policy. Morocco therefore has more than 1,000 partnership agreements with brotherly African countries in the context of effective and proactive South-South cooperation.

Sixth, the Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams, Murchidines and Murchidates provides training to African preachers in order to counter dogmatic thinking and violent extremism.

Seventh, and last, Morocco has participated in United Nations peace operations on the continent since the 1960s, aimed at ending conflicts and establishing lasting peace in Africa.

If our vision of an Africa where the guns are silenced by 2030 remains a realistic objective, the international community must redouble its efforts to achieve that goal. Let me make a few specific proposals.

First, it is necessary to tackle and resolve the root causes of conflict. Our actions must address the security, economic, climate, religious and cultural challenges and other aspects of the security and stability needs on the African continent.

Secondly, it is crucial to put in place strategies to combat the proliferation, circulation and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in Africa.

Thirdly, conflicts in Africa have shifted from a traditional pattern to one where terrorist and separatist groups are involved, threatening the territorial integrity of States, as well as international peace and security. We therefore need to prevent and respond to such threats to increase the chances of silencing the guns in

Africa by 2030, in particular by dismantling terrorist recruitment, financing and indoctrination structures.

Fourthly, it is necessary to combat poverty, hunger and social exclusion. The African Continental Free Trade Area is an ideal framework for strengthening economic integration and development in Africa.

Fifthly, climate change has direct and devastating effects on peace and security and must be taken into account in all national, continental and international peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustaining peace strategies.

Finally, the Kingdom of Morocco remains firmly committed to the principle of the indivisibility of security in Africa. My country therefore reiterates its commitment to supporting peace, security, development and prosperity so that by 2030 no one will be left behind, and by 2063 we will be able to achieve the goals that we have set for our continent.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Massari (Italy): I thank Mozambique for convening this debate and the briefers for their interventions.

Italy aligns itself with the statements to be delivered by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Croatia on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect.

Over the years, the Security Council has identified the causes of conflict that are prolonging violence on the African continent. It was therefore only natural for the Council to welcome the Silencing the Guns initiative, which focuses on the drivers of conflict in Africa and acknowledges the urgent need to address them. The initiative remains extremely relevant, as it recognizes that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. Our support for the African Union pledge to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa must be stated once again in the light of the ongoing crises that are heavily impacting the development perspectives of many countries and communities on the continent.

Through multilateral action and bilateral support, Italy therefore remains committed to contributing to the ongoing international and regional efforts to silencing the guns in Africa. We deem it important to pursue a comprehensive approach that encompasses development

cooperation, conflict prevention and peacebuilding. International support should not be limited to addressing the ongoing emergencies, but should also tackle the structural challenges and root causes of conflict, such as poverty, food insecurity, social exclusion, absence of the rule of law and violent extremism. In that context, I would like to highlight three issues that could benefit from a more concerted action.

First, on the eradication of poverty and hunger, we wish to emphasize the importance of supporting key initiatives to foster inclusive socioeconomic development in Africa. The African Continental Free Trade Area, for example, has the potential to catalyse the economic transformation of the African continent and promote the creation of more and better jobs. We would also like to highlight the essential role played by resilient food systems in combating food insecurity and enabling sustainable growth. To that end, Italy, together with the United Nations, will host the stocktaking moment of the Food Systems Summit in Rome next July.

Secondly, on achieving peace through justice and strong institutions, it is paramount to promote participatory decision-making, increase transparency and accountability and restore trust in public institutions.

Accelerating the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 also means engaging civil society, women and young people in promoting a culture of peace. In that regard, Italy is engaged with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the International Development Law Organization in promoting an inclusive dialogue within the United Nations system through the annual SDG 16 conference in Rome.

Furthermore, and lastly, on combating violent extremism, strengthening regional cooperation and institution-building to counter the terrorist threat is of crucial importance. The evolving threat of terrorism remains a grave concern and constitutes a major obstacle to the building of a peaceful and prosperous Africa.

Italy, together with Morocco, the Niger and the United States, is currently co-chairing the Africa Focus Group of the Global Coalition against Daesh, a civilian-focused counter-terrorism effort intended to enhance the capabilities of African members of the Coalition. Italy also supports the activities of the regional offices of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism in Africa.

I would like to conclude by congratulating Mozambique on its successful term as President of the Security Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim (Republic of Korea): I would first like to commend you, Mr. President, for having convened this timely and important debate. Let me also thank the briefers for their insightful remarks this morning.

The Silencing the Guns initiative of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 aspires to end all wars, conflict and gender-based violence. In 2020, the African Union extended that initiative until 2030 as a result of the coronavirus disease pandemic, but the current global geopolitical context, together with the food and energy insecurity, as well as emerging challenges, such as the climate crisis, seem to have exacerbated the already dire situation in the region.

For Africa to truly achieve the aspirations set out in the initiative, simply ending war and conflict will not be enough. Rather, it is more important to lay foundations that will lead to consolidating peace and fostering sustainable development. Against that backdrop, I would like to focus on the following three aspects.

First, there should be a greater focus on building resilient institutions and strengthening governance, which underpin the peacebuilding framework. Security sector reform is one of the critical measures to strengthen and consolidate peace in post-conflict situations. Transitional justice initiatives that address accountability are also essential to bringing together communities affected by conflict in order to take a step forward towards sustaining peace.

In that regard, the crucial role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) cannot be overemphasized. As a long-standing member of the PBC, Korea is delighted about the increased coordination between the PBC and the Security Council, and we stand ready to support such interaction.

Secondly, my delegation would like to highlight the importance of an inclusive approach as an enabler of peace and development. Indeed, the diverse and unique voices from each and every corner of our society, including women, young people, other marginalized populations and civil society, will inevitably contribute to, strengthen and enrich the path towards, sustainable peace and development.

The empowerment of women and young people is one of the priority areas of cooperation between Korea and Africa stipulated in the Korea–Africa Framework of Cooperation 2022–2026. Korea will continue to work alongside the African Union to support regional programmes in that regard.

Lastly, the efforts I mentioned simply cannot bear fruit without adequate, predictable and sustained financing. That is why we need to advance all options, including the use of assessed contributions, to finance the Peacebuilding Fund, as well as AU-led peace support operations authorized by the Security Council.

The Republic of Korea has been a consistent contributor to the PBF since 2006, with this year's contributions culminating in \$4.3 million. We have also proudly contributed more than \$17 million to the African Union's peace and security activities, including \$1.2 million to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia this year to narrow the financing gap it is facing.

There is a reason that humanitarian elements, development and peace are a nexus. They are inherently intertwined, and each pillar cannot be advanced without the other amid the complex and interconnected challenges in the region. The Republic of Korea renews its commitment to actively joining international efforts to enhance development and sustain peace in Africa.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Marschik (Austria): First, let me thank you, Mr. President, and Mozambique for convening this open debate on the Silencing the Guns initiative.

We welcome the focus on preventing conflict, promoting transformative conflict resolution and ensuring sustainable peace through development policies. Recent years have shown the interlinkages of global challenges. The coronavirus disease pandemic and the consequences of climate change have exacerbated many causes of conflict, as well as inequalities, tensions and violence. And over the past year, we saw how geopolitical tensions and conflict further derailed our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Those challenges especially affect the African continent but should not be faced by Africa alone. We need more collective efforts and solidarity towards a more peaceful world, and we need to bring the SDGs back on track.

One of the fundamental tenets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. That sounds good, but it also makes a lot of sense. To address the root causes of conflicts we need to adopt a holistic approach to peacebuilding, as well as effective development programmes. The Austrian Government, committed to implementing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, supports inclusive and democratic governance and operationalizes its development policy coherently through a whole-of-Government approach. I thought it would be best to give three concrete examples.

First, Austria cooperates with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to enhance its Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism systems in the Horn of Africa to strengthen the prediction, prevention and response to transnational security threats and to increase capacities for preventive diplomacy, mediation and civilian peacebuilding, thereby benefiting more than 10,000 participants in total.

Secondly, through the Local Development for Peace Consolidation programme, Austria cooperates with partners to improve the livelihoods of rural communities in conflict-affected districts in Mozambique. More than 400,000 people benefit from improved access to markets, public infrastructure and professional training.

Thirdly, Austria also participates in the European Union mission in Mozambique, which provides training and support to protect the civilian population and restore security in the Cabo Delgado region.

Our commitment to the triple nexus is also the basis of our work to enhance coherence within the United Nations system, both through strategic guidance and a strong Resident Coordinator system. In addition, we must redouble our efforts to promote the rule of law, democracy and the resilience of institutions to foster the cohesion of societies and promote inclusion and democracy, as well as human rights, to strengthen resilient communities that are built on trust. It is therefore no surprise that Austria places particular focus on SDG 16 and the women and peace and security agenda.

As a country committed to disarmament and a champion of responsible trade and export control, Austria also understands silencing the guns in a more literal way. Eradicating the illicit trade in small arms

and light weapons, eliminating the exorbitantly high number of such arms and tackling the challenges of ammunition storage and ammunition diversion are all key to limiting the spread and use of weapons that account for most casualties worldwide. Clearly, that requires international cooperation and assistance. Austria has therefore partnered with Senegal to improve weapons and ammunition logistics. And we look forward to expanding that project regionally in Africa.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that sustainable peace and development need to be addressed through collective action. Austria therefore stresses the need for stronger partnerships at the international, regional and local levels. We particularly advocate strengthening partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations in the field of peace and security and look forward to contributing to that, among other objectives, in the discussions on the New Agenda for Peace.

In all those efforts, full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remains the goal and purpose. We look forward to the SDG summit this September and call for an ambitious and action-oriented outcome, reflecting our resolve to create the foundations for sustainable and lasting peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovenia.

Mr. Malovrh (Slovenia): I thank the briefers for their valuable contributions earlier today.

Slovenia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would also like to share some additional remarks in our national capacity.

Sustainable development is essential to achieving long-lasting peace and stability. With its wealth of natural and human resources, the African continent in particular possesses enormous potential for economic growth and development. A comprehensive and integrated approach, focusing on socioeconomic development and addressing the root causes of conflict and violence, is therefore vital.

Allow me to make three points.

First, with regard to building resilient societies, development policies play an important role in addressing poverty, inequality and marginalization. By promoting economic growth, creating jobs and ensuring access to quality education, health care and clean water, our development policies help build

inclusive and resilient societies. Moreover, investing more in intercultural dialogue, human rights education and enabling a vibrant civil society are the necessary building blocks for a strong community that embraces diversity and provides a sense of belonging for all. Integrating sustainable development in peacebuilding is a foundation for reconciling and rebuilding peaceful communities.

My second point is on inclusivity. Development policies should be tailored to the specific needs of the local communities and must be inclusive and sustainable. Only when all segments of society are given a voice in the development processes can a sense of belonging and local ownership be achieved. Achieving sustainable peace and security builds trust and social cohesion.

Women and youth play a critical role in promoting sustainable development and peace. It is essential to invest in their empowerment by also supporting initiatives that promote education, economic empowerment and full, equal and meaningful political participation for women and youth.

Thirdly, climate change has a devastating impact on human security, peace and development in Africa. It aggravates poverty, food insecurity, water scarcity and displacement and intensifies the drivers of conflict. Development policies therefore need to prioritize climate action and promote renewable energy, sustainable land use and natural resource management to ensure environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies and communities.

In conclusion, Slovenia continues to support sustainable development initiatives in post-conflict and fragile settings, in particular in sustainable water and environmental management, food and water security and, importantly, on women's and young people's empowerment. We have prioritized our cooperation in areas that enable more sustainable water and food management, support the transition to a circular economy, fight against climate change and, more generally, support the humanitarian-development nexus.

The African Union's Silencing the Guns initiative is an important step towards achieving lasting peace, stability and sustainable development in Africa. The African Union's efforts in that regard are commendable and deserve our full support to address issues that lead to fiscal deficits and indebtedness and to increase African countries' own capacity to invest in their

economic recovery in line with the goals and targets of Agenda 2063. We remain committed to cooperating with African countries in achieving lasting peace and security for all their citizens by also strengthening our cooperation in accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Skoog.

Mr. Skoog: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

First of all, I want to thank the President and Mozambique for hosting today's open debate on a topic that we often return to, and which remains one of the core concerns for us at the United Nations: how to invest in sustainable development to foster peace and security. We all know that in order to silence the guns, we must create prosperous, resilient and inclusive societies where no one is left behind. This is why we must maintain a laser focus on achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I would like to focus on two aspects in this rich discussion: first, the importance of investing in sustainable development to address the root causes of conflict, and secondly, the need to promote greater connectivity and integration across the African continent to improve access to basic services and economic opportunities. On both topics, we in the EU believe that we are delivering on our commitments, and always in close coordination with the African Union and its members. Further, through both strands of work, we are supporting the achievement of Africa's own Agenda 2063.

On addressing the root causes of conflict, with almost half of all terrorism-related deaths globally occurring in sub-Saharan Africa, the region has emerged as the new global epicentre of violent extremist activity. Supporting initiatives to prevent radicalization and the spread of violent extremism, particularly among young people, is key. For the effective implementation of these initiatives, it is crucial to understand the motives for joining terrorist organizations, be they political, religious, economic or by coercion.

The study by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) entitled “Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment” demonstrates that to silence the guns, we have to break the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion. One example where the EU is providing such support is Mozambique: in that country, together with the UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund and local authorities in the project ResiNorte-Resilience for the North, we are enhancing social cohesion and reinforcing peace and stability through the interconnected humanitarian, development and peace spheres, and very much with local ownership.

Another example is through the updated EU integrated strategy in the Sahel, which focuses on the need to strengthen governance and provide basic services to the population as crucial factors in stabilizing the region. Limited State presence and public services can lead to a sense of isolation or neglect, which can result in mistrust between population groups and public authorities and increase the risk of conflict. The EU is addressing these issues, for example, by supporting mediation efforts between local communities and security forces in Kenya, and by training security forces in protection of civilians and engagement with local communities in Nigeria. In our experience, the inclusion of women, youth and marginalized groups is particularly crucial for such efforts to be successful.

We know that investments in prevention and peacebuilding can have a positive return: every United States dollar invested in peacebuilding could save \$16 on the cost of conflict and violence. The international community must make this sensitive investment and direct resources towards addressing the root causes of conflict. We encourage all States Members of the United Nations to find consensus soon within the Fifth Committee in order to ensure the implementation of General Assembly resolution 76/305 on financing for peacebuilding. More broadly I want to reiterate the EU’s commitment to continuing to support African-led peace support operations, including by making urgent progress in the ongoing discussions to use United Nations assessed contributions for operations authorized by the Security Council.

On the second point, a regional approach is crucial. The EU is in itself an example of how greater connectivity and integration have fostered peace across our own continent, and we stand ready to support African regional integration as well. We recently

adopted a renewed Great Lakes regional strategy and are committed to supporting the countries in that region in moving from tensions to trust and from trafficking of natural resources to trade and sustainable development. To this end, we will contribute to improved natural-resources management, cross-border cooperation and cross-border infrastructure.

The EU is Africa’s closest partner. Together with our 27 member States, as Team Europe, we are the largest provider of official development assistance, the largest investor in Africa and Africa’s number one trade partner. Through the Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package, the EU is mobilizing at least €150 billion by 2027 in such sectors as transport, education, health, energy and digitalization. Part of the Global Gateway package is support for Africa’s regional integration process, for example, through the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area. Another area is climate adaptation, where the EU is supporting the African Union Great Green Wall initiative to combat the effects of climate change.

These investments will bring people closer together through 11 strategic transport corridors that will facilitate trade, and which will also bring people closer to services, education, health care and economic opportunities. These investments are fully in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), creating resilience in societies and ultimately contributing to silencing the guns. In all these stable investments, we underline the importance of accountability, transparency and conflict sensitivity.

Finally, let us not forget that the 2030 Agenda is indivisible. Peace and security go hand in hand with sustainable development, human rights and gender equality. That is why progress in achieving the SDGs is key in setting us on the path towards silencing the guns in Africa by 2030.

We thank Mozambique again for its initiative in convening today’s meeting, and we reiterate our strongest support for investing in sustainable development to foster peace and security in Africa.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I want to share a story from the Turkana and Pokot regions of Kenya. Long-standing disputes over agricultural land erupted in violent conflict when the

local sugar industry — the main employer — collapsed due to corruption and embezzlement. With climate change, resource extraction and dwindling reserves of arable land, the situation worsened. Faced with poor job prospects, young people dropped out of school. They turned to livestock theft to pay dowries and start families. Increasingly available firearms replaced spears and arrows, and livestock theft became an increasingly deadly activity.

At first, some women supported this practice through song, joining in the smuggling of weapons, and in the end insisting on marrying wealthy rustlers, even if that wealth was the result of theft. But as the saying goes, “if you live by guns, you die by guns”. Many young men died trying to steal cattle. Many young brides became young widows in the care of devastated and traumatized families.

In response, in 2016, the POTUMA Women’s Forum was created. Although traditionally excluded from political decision-making, women began to challenge gender norms. They boycotted ceremonies that paid homage to rustlers. They reached across community boundaries to create spaces for dialogue. Although instability continues, the POTUMA Women’s Forum has resolved disputes on several occasions. Their challenge is a common one across civil society: lack of funding for local initiatives.

What lessons can we draw from this story?

First, we must address the widespread proliferation of small arms and light weapons in communities. Small arms and light weapons continue to represent a challenge that affects peace and security, human rights, gender, sustainable development and other areas. To silence weapons, we need to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade and diversion of conventional weapons through effective implementation of international and regional arms-control instruments.

Secondly, we need to provide financial and human resources at the local level to mitigate armed violence, end conflict and achieve peace and sustainable development. But in addition to the international sphere, we must work at the national and regional levels, to the extent possible, together with civil society organizations. In that regard, the African Union’s Silencing the Guns initiative is an important framework.

Thirdly, we must engage young people and adopt a long-term approach to addressing security threats. The

average age of African citizens is under 20 years. We must therefore ensure that Governments, international, regional, civil society organizations and traditional and religious leaders include youth in decision-making processes, in line with the youth, peace and security agenda. Engaging youth in the implementation of the Silencing the Guns initiative in Africa at all levels will make ownership possible, ensure the longevity of security and development policies and encourage changes in behaviour.

Fourthly, we must ensure the full, equal, meaningful and effective participation of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, in line with the women and peace and security agenda. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reminds us that, without addressing Sustainable Development Goal 5, on gender equality and women’s empowerment, achieving sustainable development and consequently peace and security will be impossible. Similarly, the African Union Agenda 2063 acknowledges the important role of women and girls as catalysts for change and prioritizes the aspirations of gender equality and women’s empowerment for the region. While the circumstances in my country, Costa Rica, might be very different than the ones we are discussing, we are also working to apply the same lessons by improving and increasing the participation of youth, local Governments and civil society through our national development and public investment plan, while integrating a gender perspective.

All of that is key to ensuring sustainable development, peace and security for everybody. That is how we can silence the guns.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Vitorino.

Mr. Vitorino: I begin by thanking you, Sir, and the Mozambican presidency of the Security Council for facilitating this important debate.

Conflicts and violence are the dominant forces behind protracted displacement, and the number of people living in conflict or violence-induced displacement reached 53.2 million people at the end of 2021, marking a new historic record. Forced displacements can also be a driver of conflict when the influx of populations leads to competition over scarce resources, land, access to services or governance, or force different groups into areas traditionally occupied by other groups. Violent extremist groups have been contesting State presence and legitimacy across the continent, often in remote and underdeveloped areas

where institutions have been weak or absent, allowing them to conduct illegal activities and, above all, exploit the civilian population. As has already been said, climate change multiplies pre-existing conflict risks and reduces the ability of communities in conflict to achieve sustainable peace, thereby jeopardizing realizing the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063.

Well-managed migration can be a powerful driver to mitigate the combined impacts of conflicts, climate change and development gaps in order to achieve the empowerment of migrants and displaced persons and contribute to the stability and economic prosperity of their host communities and countries. We can all agree on the fact that, in order to prevent conflicts and build peace, we must link early-warning systems to inclusive conflict resolution mechanisms. We, the International Organization for Migration, advocate for the inclusion of human mobility data in all conflict and context analyses. Understanding why people are on the move, their preferred solution to end their displacement and the obstacles to their reintegration are essential elements to sustain peace and preserve the gains achieved towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The capacities of national and regional authorities to prevent and resolve forced displacements need to be strengthened in order to identify the root causes and monitor conflict trends. A more holistic and timely understanding of such dynamics will enable all stakeholders to find more comprehensive solutions that enable the safer migration of persons, transhumance and other-cross border movements. In that regard, we stand ready to assist the newly established African humanitarian mechanism and the Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System, established by the African Union. We support the efforts of national and regional authorities to include migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees in peace and development planning processes, as their marginalization hinders long-term peace and stability and constitutes a major obstacle to achieving the SDGs. At the United Nations level, meaningfully including migration and displacement within the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework is critical.

In conclusion, I believe that, for the international community to help countries to transition out of crisis and situations of fragility, humanitarian, development and peace assistance should be channelled in

specific ways that promote national ownership and accountability through Government-led and, above all, community-owned processes, with the meaningful inclusion of women and youth.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), made up of 55 Member States and the European Union, which this year is co-chaired by Botswana, Costa Rica and Croatia.

We would like to commend Mozambique for organizing today's open debate, aimed at facilitating a deeper understanding of the contribution that socioeconomic factors have in promoting social cohesion, peace and stability, or, conversely, in triggering conflict.

During the special meeting of the Economic and Social Council in January on social and economic measures to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, the Group of Friends of R2P noted that economic deprivation and widening inequalities are important risk factors that could lead to atrocity crimes. They can exacerbate competition over scarce resources and severely limit the capacity of the State to resolve domestic tensions peacefully. Over the past two decades the African Union and its regional mechanisms have enhanced their capacity to deal with conflict and crisis situations on the continent. Despite the progress made in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts, Africa remains home to crises that increase the risk of the occurrence of atrocities and jeopardize human, national and regional security.

The consequences of the devastating impact of the illicit transfer, diversion and trafficking of weapons and their ammunition across Africa can be seen today in a number of conflict zones. We note that the Silencing the Guns initiative is a key effort aimed at ending conflicts on the African continent and could play a significant role in reducing the risk of atrocity crimes by limiting the availability of illicit weapons used to commit them. We congratulate Mr. Chambas on his recent appointment as the African Union High Representative for the Silencing the Guns Initiative. The African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2030 offers

an opportunity for States to address issues closely related to the responsibility to protect and to atrocity prevention, including disarmament, the arms trade and accountability, as well as combating poverty, deprivation and inequality and promoting resilience and strong and stable institutions. In that context, the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect would like to make the following points.

First, in order to adequately prevent and respond to the threat of atrocity crimes, it is essential to have a better understanding of the early warning signs. Many outbreaks of violence, conflict and atrocities are rooted in long-standing institutionalized discrimination, poor education, economic and gender inequalities, social exclusion, hate speech and violations and abuses of human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, as well as increases in illicit arms and ammunition trafficking and the growing impact of climate change, biodiversity loss and other environmental pressures. Unequal access to justice, essential resources and jobs, as well as poor market access and terms of trade and a shrinking democratic and civic space, in addition to a lack of security-sector reform policies and unsustainable disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, can contribute to creating an environment conducive to atrocity crimes. Many of those risk factors are also outlined in the United Nations Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes. In that context, the African Union's Continental Early Warning System, which has been instrumental in analysing emerging security threats, could be strengthened through the inclusion of reporting and monitoring of early warning signs of atrocity crimes. The coordination, harmonization and exchange of information between the African Union, subregional mechanisms and international partners could be further improved.

Secondly, all Member States should uphold their responsibility to protect by taking effective measures to address the root causes of violent conflicts, including the demand for and illicit supply of arms and ammunition. National ownership of those efforts is fundamental to ensuring that the Silencing the Guns initiative is adapted to specific contexts and challenges. The illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and ammunition puts civilians at risk of atrocity crimes, destabilizes communities and limits wider socioeconomic development. By implementing effective measures to prevent the illicit transfer of

small arms and light weapons and ammunition, States can also limit the means to commit atrocity crimes. In that context, we would like to recall the landmark resolutions 2220 (2015) and 2616 (2021).

Thirdly, civil-society actors are often the first to witness the indicators and early warning signs of atrocities and are therefore equipped with an in-depth understanding and expertise that States should incorporate into any atrocity prevention response. Civil society is also a key player in promoting and sustaining effective DDR policies. By including the voices and rights of local actors, particularly those most affected by ongoing atrocities, including women and girls, in decision-making processes, the international community can take more appropriate and effective preventive action that promotes respect for human rights and is community-informed and responsive to early warning signs of atrocities.

Fourthly, the Group stresses the importance of implementing the women and peace and security agenda in the context of the Silencing the Guns initiative, particularly through resolutions 2106 (2013) and 2467 (2019), and highlights the importance of taking into account the risk of conventional arms or items being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or violence against women and children.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Namibia.

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's timely open debate, bringing into focus the value of integrating the development and security nexus at a time when the African continent is experiencing, on the one hand, protracted conflicts and a surge in the menace of terrorism and violent extremism, and on the other, multiple socioeconomic challenges.

Namibia has strongly advocated for focusing on the inextricable link between peace and development. Peace remains an important precursor for development, and in turn, development cannot prosper without peace. Today's meeting is another opportunity to applaud the enhanced cooperation and continued partnership between the African Union (AU) and the United Nations, which represents an exemplary model of cooperation aimed at ridding Africa of conflicts and creates conditions conducive to growth, development and integration on the continent, as encapsulated in our continental objective of Silencing the Guns.

My delegation appreciates the value derived from the continued partnership between the United Nations and the AU in all areas of peace, security and development, under the auspices of the Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the framework for the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Both organizations should clearly outline their roles according to their comparative advantages, including in peacekeeping in Africa. Africa has taken ownership of its security and development challenges and responses. Through its current membership on the AU Peace and Security Council and in its capacity as the incumbent Chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, Namibia has endeavoured to make its humble contribution to strengthening the regional and continental peace and security architecture.

During the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations in 2020, Member States pledged to strengthen global governance for the sake of current and succeeding generations. We commend the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen international foresight and capacities to identify and adapt to new risks by providing leadership on the development of a New Agenda for Peace, as we believe strongly that there is a need to reconfigure the global peace and security architecture.

Namibia also believes that it is critical to recognize the links between all the threats to peace and security in Africa. They include socioeconomic and climate challenges, combined with illicit financial flows and criminal activities, which further fuel conflict and instability across the continent. Illicit financial flows facilitate illicit flows of arms, particularly small arms and light weapons, to non-State actors such as rebel armed groups, terrorists and criminals. Curbing illicit financial flows will make it more difficult to illicitly acquire small weapons, thereby contributing to silencing the guns.

To us, "Silencing the Guns in Africa" is not merely a slogan. It is a priority that responds to the hopes and dreams of our continent and a critical aspect of the African Union's decisions and partnerships for the socioeconomic development of Africa. It entails working hand in hand with all partners to make peace a reality, end human rights violations and effectively manage and prevent humanitarian disasters, including genocide.

Incidents of illicit arms flows and diversions of arms continue to be recorded across the continent, in defiance of the AU and regional measures in place and the Security Council resolutions designed to prevent them. That represents a threat to longer-term recovery, reconstruction and development. With greater transparency, which could be achieved by better sharing of information within the continent, it may well become much easier to detect and disrupt illicit arms flows.

International and African regional instruments that include legally or politically binding obligations and commitments provide an essential basis for preventing the proliferation and misuse of arms in Africa. There is a need for their scrupulous, systematic and inclusive implementation. Building national capacity for such action requires more dedicated international assistance in many countries.

Understanding and addressing the root causes of armed conflicts in Africa to foster development, as well as the motivations that underline the radicalization leading to violent extremism, is crucial. Considerable emphasis must therefore be placed on good governance, infrastructure development, industrialization, agricultural modernization and the promotion of entrepreneurship, as well as on addressing poverty, unemployment and inequality. Those dimensions are crucial, bearing in mind the trends with respect to the continent's changing demographic profile, its broader socioeconomic and environmental conditions and their subsequent impacts on sustainable peace and security. As Chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, and throughout our tenure on the AU Peace and Security Council, Namibia remains committed to advancing the peace-security-development nexus through dialogue, mediation and political consultations in our region and the continent, in line with the African Union's aspirations.

Namibia wishes to underscore the critical importance of peacebuilding as a foundation for sustainable development in Africa and the need to adopt a comprehensive, integrated approach to peace and development at the national and subregional levels. We would like to draw particular attention to the importance of Sustainable Development Goal 17, on partnership, in all our efforts towards building a more peaceful and prosperous world for all. We therefore strongly believe that the international community should be actively engaged in partnership with Africa to provide assistance in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding,

including for their adequate funding. Further efforts are needed to build institutional capacity to address the economic, social and humanitarian dimensions of post-conflict peacebuilding and to mobilize the needed attention and resources for individual countries.

Finally, Namibia welcomes the progress being made in increasing the participation of women in peace negotiations and leadership roles towards resolving conflicts in Africa. Indeed, it is imperative to integrate gender perspectives into institutional reforms in post-conflict countries for the full realization of Africa's longer-term vision in order to prevent the burden of armed conflicts and armed violence from falling onto the next generations of Africans.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): The State of Qatar would like to thank Mozambique for holding today's important open debate. I also thank the briefers for their informative briefings.

The State of Qatar is proud of its distinguished, high-level relations and advanced strategic partnership with the States of the African continent at all levels. The State of Qatar has become an important strategic partner of several African States, in particular of the African Union, through its diplomatic endeavours and as an impartial mediator in conflict settlement, in addition to being a reliable partner in the areas of peacemaking and peacebuilding in Africa. We take those steps in accordance with the priorities of the Silencing the Guns initiative of the African Union (AU) and United Nations efforts in the areas of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations in Africa. In that context, we recall the humanitarian and development efforts made by the State of Qatar in Africa to address the challenges faced by the continent. The State of Qatar welcomes and commends the progress made since the launching of the Silencing the Guns initiative. Several conflicts have been halted thanks to the efforts of the AU, African Governments and regional and international partners.

There is no doubt that peace and security are crucial for sustainable development, stability and prosperity. Therefore, the impacts of development policies on the implementation of the Silencing the Guns initiative in Africa are of paramount importance. Development policies that address the root causes of conflict and promote socioeconomic development can significantly contribute to achieving peace, security and sustainable

development on the continent. That is the focus of the State of Qatar in its bilateral and international partnerships, as it prioritizes those partnerships towards the achievement of inclusive economic growth and the reduction of poverty and inequality, while increasing access to education and health care and building the resilience and capacity of States and communities to peacefully resolve conflicts and prevent the spread of terrorism and violence.

The Silencing the Guns initiative is undoubtedly an African initiative. However, the objective of silencing the guns and ending wars in Africa and the entire world is the responsibility of humankind as a whole and is at the heart of the mission and task of the United Nations as reflected in the Charter of the United Nations. I am therefore pleased to reiterate the support of the State of Qatar for the Silencing the Guns initiative. I call on the United Nations and its Member States to continue assisting that important initiative to achieve its goals by 2030. The implementation of the initiative will actively contribute to maintaining international peace and security and achieving prosperity and well-being in the world.

Based on the principles and objectives of the State of Qatar's foreign policy, which rely on preventive diplomacy and mediation in conflict resolution, as well as our considerable experience in resolving a number of regional and international conflicts, we see a need to invest in addressing the root causes of conflict, with a focus on peacebuilding, mediation and dialogue, along with ensuring the effective participation of the women, young people and vulnerable sectors affected by conflict and humanitarian crises.

In conclusion, let our meeting today be a landmark opportunity for reiterating our determination to support the Silencing the Guns initiative in Africa in order to establish a conflict-free Africa and a more secure and peaceful world, and thereby to achieve the aspirations and hopes of current and future generations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Denmark.

Mr. Hermann (Denmark): On behalf of the Nordic countries — Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark — let me begin by thanking Mozambique for convening today's meeting on the development aspects of the African Union's pioneering Silencing the Guns initiative. Peace and security cannot

be achieved in isolation, as Mozambique underlines by convening today's debate.

Democracy, human rights, the rule of law and access to basic services — indeed, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals — are essential to silencing the guns. At the same time, we must recognize that illegally imported small arms and light weapons may exacerbate conflict, hamper stability and impede development. The development and peace nexus takes a very real and concrete centre stage in the Silencing the Guns initiative and the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa.

We would like to draw the Council's attention to three areas — first, the role of the African Union (AU) and other regional and subregional organizations; secondly, the need for integrated approaches; and thirdly and finally, the real and urgent need for an inclusive decision-making and peacebuilding process.

First, the Nordic countries emphasize the critical importance of regional engagement in peace and security challenges. An understanding of conflict dynamics and causes must be the starting point for finding solutions, and no one is better equipped to do that than regional organizations. The Nordics are long-standing partners of the African Union and its regional economic communities and are steadfast supporters of the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture, including its capacity for prevention, mediation and peacebuilding. We encourage further strengthening of the synergies between the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African governance architectures and an even closer AU-United Nations partnership, especially between the AU Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council, in order to effectively execute all mandates. In our view, the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace could address that issue, as well as the need for predictable funding for African-led peace operations. And let me use this occasion to make it clear that the Nordic countries would favourably consider the use of United Nations assessed contributions on a case-by-case basis to support such operations. We also call for focused efforts to ensure the protection of human rights and respect for international humanitarian law in all operations, as well as accountability when violations occur.

Secondly, the operationalization of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus is key to providing the comprehensive and integrated approach needed to silence the guns. It is also crucial that development policies fully incorporate that objective. Our organizations and structures may be built in silos, but we all know that reality and conflict dynamics are never siloed, and we must be cognizant of that.

Thirdly and finally, we must ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and other stakeholders in decision-making and peacebuilding processes to leverage local knowledge and solutions so that we can silence the guns within communities, too. We commend those AU member States, like Mozambique, that have adopted national action plans on women and peace and security. Their implementation can help recognize the gendered impacts of the illicit trade in small arms as well as address barriers to participation, including discrimination, shrinking civic space, sexual and gender-based violence and reprisals. Furthermore, let us recognize that there can be no sustainable peace without the full and meaningful participation of young people in decisions related to silencing the guns.

Let me conclude by underlining that we need all stakeholders engaged to deliver on the promise of a more peaceful future for generations to come. We, the Nordic countries, are prepared to do our bit.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): I thank you, Sir, for convening this important open debate on peace and security in Africa, focusing on the impact of development policies in the implementation of the Silencing the Guns initiative. Let me also congratulate you and the delegation of Mozambique on your sterling leadership and conduct of the presidency of the Security Council during this month. And I thank the briefers for their very important contributions.

The African Union Master Roadmap on silencing the guns in Africa highlights that the cycle of violent conflicts and disruptive crises persists on the continent, as do situations where we have seen relapses into a cycle of violence and destruction for some countries that were perceived to have emerged from conflicts. It is critically important for Africa and its people to put in place strategic guidelines to address those challenges. Sierra Leone therefore appreciates the convening of this debate, which presents an opportunity to propose

multidimensional approaches and solutions to silencing the guns in Africa.

While a lack of good governance, along with economic challenges and marginalization from political processes, is behind some of the root causes of conflict across much of Africa, there is a need to focus on prevention as a way of addressing both the proximate and the remote causes of those conflicts. Of course, solutions to conflict situations on the continent must be expressly diagnosed and the root causes targeted and addressed. A comprehensive and inclusive approach to preventing conflict must therefore include the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the goals of the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and development policies that tangibly benefit and transform the lives of ordinary people on the continent.

The impact of development policies on the implementation of the Silencing the Guns initiative should be positive, but they can be negative as well. In cases where development policies tend to benefit a minority of persons in a particular country, the consequences might lead to inequality and conflict. The goal is to frame and implement development policies to generate positive impacts, leading to stability and prosperity. Sierra Leone has undertaken a number of development initiatives since the end of our civil conflict more than two decades ago, not least the implementation of three poverty reduction strategies and our current medium-term national development plan, which is focused on human capital development and prioritizes education. That has had a direct correlation to the consolidation of peace and stability in Sierra Leone over the years.

Let me conclude by emphasizing the link between development and silencing the guns, which cannot be overstated. Governments are urged to allocate adequate resources to implement development policies and priorities, foster a conducive environment for private-sector growth and job creation and take all necessary measures to mitigate against and prevent the drivers of conflict.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Greece.

Mr. Sekeris (Greece): I would like to join others in expressing my appreciation to Mozambique for organizing this open debate.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to add a few points in my national capacity.

This debate is taking place amid persistent challenges, including geopolitical tensions and conflicts, recovery from a pandemic, inflation and acute food insecurity. The climate crisis is creating additional setbacks for African countries, many of them highly vulnerable in environmental terms. Silencing the guns requires looking beyond peace and security issues and focusing on the structural transformation of the socioeconomic arena, ensuring that all Africans benefit from integrated and inclusive economies.

Despite the challenges, we remain optimistic and believe that the African continent will look very different in the future. Interconnected and multidimensional megatrends will reshape the continent, and with it the needs of development cooperation. Africa's dynamic young population, abundance of resources and diversity have the potential to transform the continent into an immense driver of global peace and prosperity. The African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want serves as a useful blueprint to that end. In that vein, it will be critical to support nationally owned and led efforts to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. Africa must further develop its own institutions, policies and strategies to prevent conflict. The following are some key areas that in our opinion require urgent consideration.

First, there must be a focus on human development, notably in basic services such as health and education. The development of human capital is a factor that contributes to a country's resilience to external shocks.

Secondly, there should be a tailored approach to blended finance and investment promotion, taking into account the specific needs and vulnerabilities of African countries.

Thirdly, it is essential to ensure effective delivery systems for public services, which are vital to enforcing long-term solutions and ensuring that the State is perceived as a legitimate and active presence even in the most remote areas. Furthermore, women and young people should be fully integrated into all aspects of decision-making to ensure inclusivity and diversity.

Lastly, implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area will effectively facilitate intra-African trade for micro-, small and medium-sized businesses,

expand access to markets and create new opportunities for enhanced livelihoods for Africans.

Sustainable development without peace and security is simply unattainable. It is crucial to invest in conflict prevention and peacebuilding and to put women and girls at the centre of security policy. It is equally essential to promote the New Agenda for Peace. High-quality and effective social dialogue at all levels of governance is a prerequisite for ensuring more participatory and inclusive policy outcomes.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

Mr. Kayinamura (Rwanda): Allow me to join previous speakers in commending the Mozambique presidency for convening this debate and in thanking the briefers who spoke this morning.

Our contribution to this debate emphasizes conflict prevention and resolution, security-sector reform, peacebuilding and investment in sustaining peace. It is a fact that silencing the guns and creating peace cannot be sustained without clear development policies. Good governance and inclusive institutions remain the most effective ways to prevent conflicts and build peace. It is therefore crucial to ensure that Governments, regional organizations and the international community focus on addressing the underlying causes of conflict. At the national level, our post-conflict experience in Rwanda has shown how important it is to develop strong institutions that establish the foundations of good governance based on the rule of law, democratic principles, values and accountability.

The African Union's road map for silencing the guns in Africa is an important framework, which, if implemented and supported, will contribute to an Africa free of violent conflict. Conflicts and wars in Africa have multiple causes. That is why the efforts to prevent or resolve them should also be multifaceted. Peace, security and development endeavours cannot be sequential, but, rather, should be parallel. One without the other creates a cycle of vulnerability for a State and its people. Any development framework has little to no room to materialize if there is no peace. Allow me to conclude with three points.

First, we must fully embrace the commitments to the peace agenda within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. One of the main achievements of the 2030 Agenda was to recommit to a radically different

approach to development in conflict-affected and transitional environments. Fostering inclusion, ensuring access to justice, strengthening the social fabric and delivering good governance have repeatedly shown to be essential to delivering the outcomes of sustainable peace. Progress against the 36 targets across the 2030 Agenda must be achieved, and all such progress should be reported in all Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) reporting cycles.

Secondly, we must reaffirm a commitment to human rights — the foundation for human dignity, justice and social equality. Human rights, including economic, social, cultural heritage and minority rights, are the foundation of a world order based on equality and inclusion and are the ultimate yardstick against which we can measure the 2030 Agenda aspiration of no one left behind.

Thirdly, and lastly, we must think at the local level, but act at the global level by recommitting to multilateralism as a safeguard for the most vulnerable. National implementation alone will not suffice to achieve the SDGs. Forty per cent of the Goal 16 targets require implementation at the regional and international levels. That is particularly the case with regard to the issue of peace, where fostering the external drivers of peace, justice and inclusion requires a concerted effort and action by States, as duty holders, to support and be responsible for the prevention of small arms flows.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Ms. Kelly (Ireland): I thank you, Mr. President, for having convened today's open debate on this important topic, and congratulations on your presidency. My thanks also go to the impressive line-up of briefers for their insightful reflections.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Having learned from the experience of conflict on the island of Ireland, we recognize the need to address the underlying socioeconomic factors that can fuel tensions and contribute to conflict. Poverty, inequality and marginalization can create fertile ground for grievances to take root. Addressing those issues is essential to achieving lasting peace.

That was true in Northern Ireland. Today it remains true in many parts of Africa, where drivers of conflict are compounded by legacies of slavery, colonization,

the imposition of artificial borders and the unjust exploitation of natural resources.

Such challenges can be overcome with the right policies, the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, the inclusion of young people, effective leadership and support from the international community. Indeed, in recent years progress has been made, guided by the imperative to silence the guns and create conditions conducive to Africa's sustainable development.

Your own country, Mr. President, is an emerging success story. It is remarkable to think that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process provided for in the Maputo Accord is nearing completion. That truly is a significant achievement and a testament to the determination of the Government of Mozambique and the supportive role of the United Nations, including the Office of the Personal Envoy.

Peace is a process, not a destination. While the Silencing the Guns initiative is of course an important road map, we still have work to do to achieve its ambition. One source of concern is the increase in unconstitutional changes of Government. In other contexts, progress is held back by gaps in governance and a convergence of vulnerabilities and security challenges, such as terrorism, violent extremism, the surge of foreign fighters and mercenaries, corruption, transnational organized crime and the impacts of climate change. In many contexts, the illicit transfer, accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons contribute to the persistence of those security challenges, exacerbating their impacts. That is a problem that we must address.

Moving from conflict to sustainable development is never a straight line. It is a complex, but vital journey towards a safer, more secure and prosperous Africa. The international community has a critical role to play, in coordination with the African Union and subregional initiatives. Ireland is determined to support African countries in that collective effort. We are committed to investing in development programmes that prioritize conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Romania.

Mr. Feruță (Romania): Romania commends Mozambique for organizing today's open debate, and aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of

the European Union (EU) and the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect.

The Silencing the Guns initiative seeks to make Africa free from wars, conflict and gender-based violence and to prevent genocide. In other words, this is an opportunity to build resilient societies. The initiative also tackles fragilities that hamper peace and security on the African continent, with reverberations worldwide.

A conflict or a war anywhere in the world has global consequences. Transformative and sustainable solutions, including sustainable development policies, should be a part of the United Nations toolbox in addressing them. Accountability is an indivisible part of those solutions.

Romania has invested in the capacity-building of some African States, as well as in educating young generations, which can be seen as our pledge to silencing the guns. Starting in 2008, Romania has been organizing a post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction training programme, with the past four sessions having been exclusively dedicated to the African continent. In 2019, the programme was organized in Addis Ababa, in partnership with the African Union. Last year's edition took place in Senegal and was dedicated to West Africa. Twenty-four experts from the region participated.

Likewise, a share of approximately 60 per cent of the total national development assistance provided by Romania was granted in support of young people's education and the promotion of their participation. Both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania grant higher-education scholarships to incoming students from Africa.

As a staunch supporter of the women and peace and security agenda, we will continue to advocate for the promotion of women and girls and their meaningful contribution to peace processes. We encourage countries to adopt and implement national action plans. That is a key point for Romania in 2023, as, together with the United States, we co-chair the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network.

Romania shares many of the challenges faced by Governments and people in Africa — the brain drain, harnessing the advantages of digitalization and finding well-balanced solutions to support environmentally friendly policies that take into account the social costs of the green revolution, among other things. Romania's more than 30 years of experience since embracing

democracy have taught us invaluable lessons in terms of both successes and errors, which we are open to sharing with friends.

In 2023, Romania plans to continue its actions towards achieving peace, development, human rights and security in Africa as a pledge in the run-up to the Sustainable Development Goals Summit this September. Our focus will be on the transfer of knowledge in the area of the management of emergency situations — and Member States will hear more during the upcoming debates on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 — agriculture, with regard to the compliance of African economies with EU phytosanitary measures and education, media resilience, diplomacy and post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation.

I conclude by congratulating Mozambique on its successful presidency of the Security Council this month.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Czechia.

Mr. Kulháněk (Czechia): First of all, since Mozambique's presidency of the Security Council is almost over, I would like to use this opportunity to congratulate it on a very successful presidency. I thank you, Mr. President, for holding this very important and timely debate, which offers a valuable opportunity to exchange views on preventing conflicts, promoting conflict resolution and ensuring long-term peace and security through inclusive, transparent and effective development policies.

It is essential to reiterate time and again that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. In that regard, my country, Czechia, stresses the importance of resolution 2457 (2019), by which the Security Council welcomed the Silencing the Guns initiative and its Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa. The African Union's Master Roadmap is absolutely correct to point out that most crises and violent conflicts in Africa are driven by poverty and economic hardships, and that peace, security and socioeconomic development must be pursued simultaneously. I would like to use this opportunity to highlight those areas to which Czechia pays special attention in its development cooperation with African partners and which, from our point of view, are key

to ensuring stability, sustainable development and the prevention of conflicts on the continent.

The environment is one of the main challenge areas listed in the Master Roadmap. Specifically, there is a need to reduce the vulnerabilities of livelihoods to climate change by building resilient systems. In that context, agriculture must be diversified with a view to making it more resilient against the adverse effects of climate change and implementing the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods. Agriculture is the backbone of Africa's economy and a source of livelihood for the majority of the continent's population. However, in sub-Saharan Africa that sector generates only about 14 per cent of the gross domestic product. Therefore, we must continue supporting small and medium-scale African farmers. We must help improve knowledge of effective, resilient and sustainable agricultural practices and encourage mechanization, smart farming solutions and the building of local value chains for agriculture and food production. Farmers must have also better access to financial services.

Together with agriculture, we should enhance our focus on sustainable rural development, including by ensuring access to safe water, health and nutritional services and quality education. We must also place a special focus on African young people, who are increasingly leaving villages for towns. We must also focus on the economic empowerment of rural women and girls, with the aim of reducing chronic poverty while striving to close social gaps and decrease dependence on external food assistance, which is exacerbated by crises such as Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the coronavirus disease pandemic. Furthermore, our efforts to help increase Africa's agricultural productivity must not fail to address the impacts of climate change on the continent. Czechia is part of the Team Europe Initiative on Climate Adaptation and Resilience in Africa. We sincerely hope that, together with the African Union and regional authorities, we can considerably enhance multi-hazard early-warning and early-action capacities in Africa.

Along with climate adaptation, we can also improve overall stabilization. We must continue to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in the agriculture sector by working towards the key objectives of disaster prevention, preparedness and resilience-building. The recent devastating impacts of

Cyclone Freddy in southern Africa have shown that there is still much work to be done. In other words, Africa will not be stable and conflict-resilient unless it can rely on more efficient and climate-resilient agriculture that is even better prepared to face natural disasters.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ethiopia.

Mr. Sabo (Ethiopia): We welcome and thank the President of Mozambique for presiding over the meeting this morning. I would also like to convey our congratulations to the Mozambican team for its successful presidency of the Security Council for the month. We thank the team for convening this open debate on a topic of foremost importance for Africa and allowing our participation to contribute to the discussions. I commend all the briefers this morning for their pertinent and insightful remarks.

Silencing the guns is the chief flagship project of Agenda 2063. That target was set with an underlying recognition of the fact that development and peace are inextricably linked. Accordingly, all African countries pledged to eradicate poverty in one generation and build shared prosperity through the social and economic transformation of the continent. We recognized that security should be seen in its totality, including the right of people to live in peace with access to the basic necessities of life, while enjoying the rights and participating in the affairs of their societies. In that blueprint for Africa's transformation, we committed to addressing the root causes of conflicts, including economic and social disparities. On that basis, the Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa clearly stipulates that peace, security and socioeconomic development should be pursued simultaneously.

Our continental policies are fully cognizant of Africa's political history, which has been marred by three major tragedies — namely, slavery, colonization and the exploitation of natural resources. While the burden from our past continues to be a challenge, Africa has risen to the challenge to assume total responsibility for its destiny through the realization of a conflict-free and prosperous continent. We rekindled and redeployed the spirit of pan-African solidarity and unity of purpose, which underpinned the achievement of emancipation from slavery, colonialism and apartheid. That regional approach to development and peace underpins the principle that the security, stability and development of

every African country are inseparably linked to those of the other African countries.

For Africa to unlock the development potential and reap the demographic dividend we enjoy owing to our youthful population, Africa should drive its own development through the sustainable management of its resources. The inalienable sovereign right of African countries to use and manage their natural resources and to meet the needs of the African people needs to be respected. Member States should develop, protect, manage and equitably utilize their shared natural resources for their mutual benefit.

On that basis, we incorporate Agenda 2063 within our national policies on inclusive growth; job creation; increasing agricultural production; investments in science, technology, research and innovation; gender equality; youth empowerment; and the provision of basic services, including in the areas of health, nutrition, education, shelter, water and sanitation. The African Continental Free Trade Area has gone operational, bringing Africa closer to its goal of creating an economic community. At the national level, my country, Ethiopia, devised and implemented a green and climate-resilient economy. We make concerted efforts to restore nature and protect biodiversity through our record-breaking Green Legacy Initiative. Our efforts are bearing fruit, as Ethiopia is on track to increase its forest coverage from 15 to 30 per cent by 2030. We are increasing our allocation of resources for agriculture, which has led us to successfully substituting the import of grains such as wheat by enhancing local production. We are working to meet the increasing need for the supply of clean energy and to close the deficit.

These development efforts at the national and regional level are designed and implemented to reinforce peace and address the root causes of conflict. With strong pan-African solidarity and unity of purpose, we shall achieve peace through our development policies and encouraging trajectories.

Because economic development must be complemented by other efforts, we shall make sure that systems for political independence and context-relevant, effective and democratic governance are put in place. In line with this, our agenda for the continent calls for concerted action for good governance, democracy, social inclusion, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law. We are also working to ensure that the root causes of extremism and violence are addressed in a concerted

manner, using multidimensional interventions. In this regard, we concur with the President of Mozambique's words addressed to the Peacebuilding Commission yesterday, that "it is true that not all conflict and terror is home-grown for Africa".

We must therefore enhance cooperation and partnerships to curb the threats to peace and security emanating not only from internal causes but also from external sources. In this regard, our partnership with the United Nations and friends from outside the continent is indispensable. Political backing and development partnership, including debt cancellation and relief, should be seen as an investment in realizing the aspirations of people to development and peace and to the creation of a renewed future, where our children will live in peace on our shared planet.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Chukwu (Nigeria): At the outset, let me congratulate the President of the Republic of Mozambique, His Excellency Mr. Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, for a successful presidency of the Security Council this month and for organizing today's important meeting, particularly as this year marks the tenth anniversary of the collective proclamation by African leaders to silence the guns. I also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Cristina Duarte, African Union High Representative Mohamed Ibn Chambas and other briefers for their insightful contributions to today's debate.

Peace, security and development in Africa remains an important but challenging global agenda. Besides the many socioeconomic and development challenges, Africa's Silencing the Guns by 2030 initiative also faces some hurdles related to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the expansion of terrorist activities across the continent, the recent wave of unconstitutional changes of Government and inadequate funding for regionally led peace support operations. In this regard, allow me to highlight four areas on which we must focus to accelerate the implementation of the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa and to deliver greater success in the initiative's remaining six years.

First, promoting the development agenda is essential to enhancing national ownership of the Vision 2030 target. Widening access to education, strengthening good governance, securing technology transfer and promoting inclusive participation of women and youth

in governance and economic activities will lead to more resilient societies. Nowhere is this need more evident than in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin regions of sub-Saharan Africa, which are also grappling with the devastating consequences of climate change on livelihoods and development. Accordingly, we believe that recovery and resilience strategies must be centred on unique national and regional perspectives that address the root causes of violent conflict.

Secondly, ensuring adequate, predictable and sustainable financing for peace and security activities remains a major challenge facing the African Union (AU), regional institutions and African States. While the strategic partnership between the AU and United Nations continues to bear fruit, the obstacles to providing support to African-led peace operations from United Nations assessed contributions need to be overcome. Likewise, mobilization of domestic resources is key and will require increased collective efforts to tackle illicit financial flows that are depriving the continent of vast amounts of its much-needed resources.

Thirdly, expanding knowledge and research capabilities on illicit arms flow in the region is important in curbing the inflow, proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. For its part, Nigeria has established a national centre for the control of small arms and light weapons, which provides policy guidance, research and monitoring of all aspects of small arms and light weapons in the country, in close collaboration with relevant national, regional and international stakeholders.

Lastly, to echo the point made by President Nyusi this morning, achieving the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative will be jeopardized if terrorism is allowed to persist on the continent. In this regard, Nigeria and the Office of Counter-Terrorism will host a regional counter-terrorism summit for Africa in Abuja to identify ways of strengthening regional responses to the threat of terrorism in Africa. The Security Council's support towards the successful outcome of this event is welcome.

In concluding, I wish to reaffirm Nigeria's unwavering commitment to the effective implementation of the AU Master Roadmap on Silencing the Guns, which would greatly contribute towards the realization of AU's Agenda 2063 and fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We call on all Council

members to sustain their support for the African continent and these critical agendas.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Ms. Hayovyshyn (Ukraine): Ukraine welcomes today's debate on the implementation of the Silencing the Guns agenda, and we express our appreciation to Mozambique as President of the Security Council for convening it. I would like to thank all the briefers for their substantive briefings today.

Ukraine fully supports the African Union's ambitious goal to end all wars, civil conflicts, terrorism and gender-based violence. We believe that long-term sustainable development is a vital prerequisite for achieving this noble objective.

We positively note the African Union's endeavours to champion inclusive and sustainable development policies. However, notwithstanding the enormous efforts undertaken by the African Union and the countries of the continent in different fields, Africa still faces various challenges, including, but not limited to economic difficulties, unemployment, competition over power and resources, terrorist and mercenary activity, the illicit exploitation of natural resources, and climate change.

Ukraine reiterates the importance of the successful implementation of the priorities outlined by the African Union in its Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa in all domains. We believe that Africa must address both the symptoms and the root causes of conflict. In attending to the current problems of peace and security, all parties concerned should work on the elimination of the sources of those problems. As one of the key initiatives within the African Union's Agenda 2063, Silencing the Guns is aimed at creating an environment conducive to and incentives for economic growth and investment. We believe there are a number of priorities whose implementation is crucial — reinforcing good governance and the rule of law; ensuring unrestricted access to quality education; stimulating economic diversification and sustainable livelihoods; ensuring the substantive and equal participation and leadership of women and further strengthening United Nations cooperation with the African Union and the relevant regional economic communities.

Among the many challenges that Africa is facing today, special attention should be paid to the activities of mercenaries. In that regard, we are particularly concerned about the growing footprint in a number of African countries of the Wagner Group, an international criminal organization that is closely linked to Moscow's regime. There have been many credible reports of crimes committed by the Wagner Group, including torture, the systematic killing of civilians and mass looting. Ukraine is a country where that criminal organization is currently not only committing grave human rights violations but also actively participating in combat operations against the Armed Forces of Ukraine and using various methods of warfare, in particular by turning to Russian jails to recruit thousands of convicts, including people of African descent, who are being cynically and ruthlessly used in Russia's war against an independent State.

In conclusion, Ukraine is strengthening its relations with Africa. We are intensifying our dialogue with every country on the continent at every level. As a reliable food supplier, Ukraine has continued to provide wheat as humanitarian aid to Ethiopia and Somalia, despite the obstacles that Russia is creating. We will remain a reliable and responsible partner for all African countries.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mrs. Kamboj (India): Let me begin by congratulating the delegation of Mozambique on a very successful presidency, as well as on organizing today's debate. I also thank the briefers and speakers for their useful insights.

Several countries in Africa, particularly in the Sahel, Central Africa and the Horn of Africa, continue to be conflict-ridden as a result of factors that are driven by chronic political instability, ethnic divisions and exploitation by terrorist and armed groups. External factors also play a role in fuelling such conflicts, and that continues to be a matter of deep concern. We therefore all need to come together to support Africa's efforts to silence the guns by end of the decade. In that regard, I would like to make six points.

First, inclusive politics, well-established governance structures and decentralized Administrations are critical elements in nation-building, and those processes can be long and complex, particularly for countries ravaged by centuries of colonial rule. It is important to recognize

the primacy of national Governments and authorities in identifying and driving priorities, strategies and activities for sustaining peace and development and for avoiding relapses into conflict.

Secondly, we need to acknowledge and accept African leadership and Africa-driven solutions to Africa's problems, which as I understand it was stated in as many words by the President of Mozambique yesterday at a meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission. Trying an external one-size-fits-all solution is a sure-fire recipe for failure. A deeper understanding of conflicts in Africa that best responds to their local wisdom, as well as the development of a sense of ownership, is a critical factor in resolving such conflicts and achieving lasting peace.

Thirdly, the Security Council should fully leverage the comparative advantage of Africa's regional and subregional organizations to resolve prolonged conflicts. Collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union, and with subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, has always yielded positive results.

Fourthly, terrorism has to be contained, given that it is the biggest security threat in Africa. It is important to strengthen the capacities of national, regional and subregional responses to terrorism in Africa through capacity-building, training and the provision of equipment and sustainable financial support, bilaterally as well as multilaterally. Initiatives such as the African Union Transition Mission to Somalia, the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique and the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram need more robust support from the Security Council and the international community.

Fifthly, peacebuilding efforts in Africa must be strengthened. Major donors, particularly developed countries and the international financial institutions, should ramp up their official development assistance commitments and eliminate barriers to concessional financing to Africa's economies so that they can achieve the goals enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Lastly, for the sake of the Council's credibility, it is important that Africa have permanent representation in

its decision-making. In every debate on issues in these areas pertaining to Africa in the Security Council, India has consistently called for ensuring that Africa's aspirations, as outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, are honoured. The Council must move meaningfully beyond mere lip service to address Africa's core concerns.

India has been supporting several African countries through development partnerships, capacity-building, including of security forces and institutions, scholarships, vocational training and knowledge-sharing and providing preferred market access to African products, among other efforts. India will continue to do its utmost to support our African brethren in their quest for sustainable peace, and as our Minister for External Affairs, Mr. Jaishankar, has aptly said, "In India, you will always find a friend willing to stand with you through thick and thin".

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Ms. Jimenez de la Hoz (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, let me warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your presidency of the Security Council, which is ending this week. And I thank you very much for convening this debate, which is very important for my delegation.

Spain aligns itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to add some comments on the topic in my national capacity.

First, in addressing peace and security in Africa, reality and experience have confirmed for us the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach that besides focusing on peace and security, encompasses sustainable development, the strengthening of institutions and safe, orderly and regular migration. That comprehensive approach and the importance of the link between security and development has informed Spain's two successive presidencies of the General Assembly of the Sahel Alliance. Our cooperation is particularly focused on supporting the peace and security pillar with the aim of promoting peace and stability, good governance, human rights and the prevention of terrorism, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. I would also like to specifically mention Spain's support for the promotion of gender equality and the participation of women in the areas of governance, peace and security in Africa, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Recently,

together with UN-Women, Spain organized a seminar in the Niger on the role of women as mediators. We have also contributed €400,000 to the women, peace and security programme of the Economic Community of West African States, and €20 million to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)/Spanish Fund for African Women's Empowerment.

At the regional level, Spain supports the leadership of the African Union and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA)-NEPAD. At the most recent meeting of the Executive Council of the African Union, Mr. José Manuel Albares Bueno, Spain's Minister for Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation, announced a €50 million contribution to peace and security efforts and inclusive and productive growth, in addition to the €20 million earmarked for AUDA-NEPAD. In anticipation of the Spanish presidency of the Council of the European Union for the second half of this year, we are working on organizing a high-level European-African meeting on job-creating investments. The Spanish presidency will also coincide with the Sustainable Development Goals Summit and the ministerial-level Summit of the Future. In that regard, for our part, we will work to ensure a comprehensive approach to peace and security that can result in stability and sustainable development on the African continent.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Prabowo (Indonesia): First of all, allow me to extend my delegation's appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening today's open debate, and to all the briefers for their updates. Indonesia applauds Africa's continued commitment to silencing the guns despite the ever-growing challenges. In the light of our aspirations for a New Agenda for Peace, business as usual is not an option. We need a comprehensive and inclusive approach to realizing peace and stability in Africa. On that note, my delegation would like to underline three points.

First, at the national level we need to ensure that local communities, including women and young people, are empowered in the areas of peace and development. That constitutes a bottom-up approach throughout the peace continuum. People's ownership at the grass-roots level and the national ownership of the process must both be nurtured. The United Nations, through its organs, including the Security Council, could

widen its support to a people-centred mechanism, for instance, through peacekeeping efforts in numerous missions aimed at promoting positive community engagement programmes.

Secondly, at the regional level we need to enhance partnerships. Indonesia believes that the region knows best about prevention, responding to security challenges and making efforts to sustain peace. In that regard, the African Union and other subregional organizations in Africa should play a prominent role in synergizing security initiatives, such as the Silencing the Guns initiative, through development projects that involve numerous actors. Enhanced partnership between the United Nations and the relevant regional entities in Africa is imperative to build strategic dialogue and create platforms to enable collaboration. Moreover, international partnerships in supporting capacity-building and the sharing of best practices to maintain good governance should also be bolstered, including through South-South and triangular cooperation.

Thirdly, we need to strengthen the integrated strategy of peacebuilding efforts. The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) should strengthen its role in bridging security and development contexts in post-conflict settings. Furthermore, the PBC should make the most of its convening role in order to facilitate synergy and coherence in peacebuilding. That should be done through its active engagement with all relevant United Nations entities and implementing actors on the ground, in particular to support institution-building and reconstruction in affected areas, as well as to support transparency in order to prevent the relapse of conflicts. The effective accomplishment of that task will depend on accountable, sustainable and predictable resources. Indonesia believes that broadening the sources of funding, such as by fostering partnerships with international financial institutions and the private sector, will be key.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize our view that without peace there can be no development, and without development there can be no peace. Indonesia reiterates its steadfast support to Africa's efforts in advancing a stable and prosperous region.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. Mainero (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, we commend Mozambique for organizing today's open debate, which has allowed us to gain a

deeper understanding of how socioeconomic factors contribute to promoting social cohesion, peace and stability. In Africa as in other regions of the world, the implementation of structural change in individual countries is the key to maintaining a virtuous circle of development and peace. In that regard, it is worth noting that the African economy has seen significant growth in recent years. That economic growth should be sustained, including as a way to generate employment and opportunities, which will make it possible to deepen the process aimed at addressing the structural causes of conflicts.

In recent times, there has been a global trend of national conflicts rapidly becoming regional in nature. To ensure peace and generate growth, it is necessary to stabilize the areas of conflict and prevent those sources of instability from spreading to other areas. Economic difficulties and inequalities are major risk factors that can lead to conflict, exacerbate the competition for resources and limit States' ability to resolve internal tensions peacefully. We note that the Silencing the Guns initiative is a key effort aimed at ending conflicts on the African continent that could play an important role in reducing such conflicts by limiting the availability of illicit weapons.

Over the past two decades, the African Union (AU) and its regional mechanisms have demonstrated their ability to address conflict and crisis situations on the continent. In that regard, we highlight the support and collaboration of the United Nations-African Union partnership, which generates synergies and coordinates different initiatives in order to reduce conflicts and achieve lasting and sustainable peace. A positive example of that is the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, which was signed on 19 April 2017. That agreement cemented the relationship between the two organizations and their shared quest for peace and security in Africa.

On another note, terrorism poses obstacles to the development of countries, and it is therefore essential that the complexities of that phenomenon be addressed jointly in a comprehensive multilateral effort among the relevant United Nations and AU entities and units, based on coordination and cooperation, in order to effectively prevent and combat that scourge. Coordinated action is required among the States of the region, subregional organizations and the United Nations in order to address the activities of terrorist groups and at the same time to

confront the illicit trafficking of drugs and small arms and light weapons.

African issues are a constant focus of the Security Council. With the Council's assistance, much progress has been made by African States, the African Union and other subregional organizations in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The partnership between the United Nations and the African Union and its member States is vital to realizing the collective efforts for peace and security on the continent.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mabeba (South Africa): South Africa welcomes the convening of today's open debate on the impact of development policies on the implementation of the silencing the guns agenda pertaining to peace and security in Africa. This debate is apt, as the year 2023 marks the tenth anniversary of the Silencing the Guns initiative of the African Union (AU). We also appreciate the informative briefings delivered this morning.

Notwithstanding the effects of the coronavirus disease and other multidimensional challenges, the African continent has made meaningful progress in advancing socioeconomic development since the adoption of the African Union's Agenda 2063, including the Silencing the Guns initiative. Progress has been made at the national and regional levels through projects led by the African Union Development Agency and the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which are mandated to fast-track the realization of Agenda 2063. Progress has also been made through the strengthening of the African governance architecture to complement the African peace and security architecture.

The Silencing the Guns initiative is a manifestation of African people's desire to end the scourge of violent conflict and suffering on the continent in pursuit of shared prosperity and socioeconomic development. That laudable initiative is therefore one of the key flagship projects of Agenda 2063, which is the blueprint for Africa's socioeconomic development. We recognize, however, that the quest for achieving prosperity and socioeconomic development is contingent on ending violent conflict, fragility and instability on the African continent, because peace and development are intertwined. Against that backdrop, the AU and the respective regional economic communities have adopted several frameworks to aid countries in achieving their respective development objectives by

focusing primarily on addressing the root causes and drivers of insecurity, while improving governance, building requisite skills and institutional capacity. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the AU's Agenda 2063 remain the overarching frameworks driving development imperatives on the continent.

However, there are impediments to silencing the guns permanently as evidenced by continuance, relapses, and recurrence of conflicts in some parts of the continent. These calls for strategic and targeted investment to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace through strengthened post-conflict reconstruction and development interventions. Building resilience in institutions responsible for the promotion of inclusive economic growth and development is vital.

It is also important to recognize that the implementation of development policies requires long-term financing. Therefore, multilateral development banks, development finance institutions and the private sector all have a critical role in assisting financing and implementing development aspirations of African countries with a view to accelerate the attainment of both Agenda 2063 and the SDG's.

Forging partnerships among important partners in peacebuilding and sustaining peace is pivotal for coordination of efforts. We encourage United Nations entities, especially the United Nations Development Programme, to cooperate closely with affected African countries, the African Union and subregional organizations in providing necessary assistance on development policies aimed at extricating these countries from fragility and violent conflicts.

While we reflect on the impact of development policies on ending conflicts and suffering in Africa, we also need to recognize the effects of external factors that impact on development policies. Unilateral sanctions and other economic coercive measures, as well as illicit financial flows, have been proven as impediments to the socioeconomic development of countries on the continent. Those barriers must be addressed effectively if the African continent is to achieve its full development potential, peace, and stability.

We also believe that it is prudent to continue conversations aimed at assessing the implementation of activities associated with the Silencing of the Guns initiative. In addition to ensuring the implementation of resolution 2457 (2019), the Master Roadmap on Practical Steps to Silencing the Guns in Africa and its monitoring mechanism are useful benchmarks for assessing the progress made on the impact of development policies on the initiative.

In conclusion, South Africa remains resolute in actively advancing Africa's aspiration of attaining lasting peace, security and prosperity, and we support the continued focus of the Security Council on peace and security on the continent.

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

Mozambique would like to thank all delegations that honoured us with their participation in this open debate at different levels.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.