



Security Council

Distr.: General
21 May 2021

Original: English

Letter dated 21 May 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres; His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, as well as the statements delivered by Their Excellencies Mr. Wang Yi, State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China; Mr. Othman Jerandi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad of Tunisia; Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France; Mr. S. Jaishankar, Minister for External Affairs of India; Mr. Bui Thanh Son, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam; Mr. Simon Coveney, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence of Ireland; Ms. Eva-Maria Liimets, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia; Mr. Mutahi Kagwe, Cabinet Secretary for Health of Kenya; Mr. Dag-Inge Ulstein, Minister of International Development of Norway; Ms. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Permanent Representative of the United States and Member of President Biden's Cabinet; Mr. James Duddridge, Minister for Africa at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; as well as by the representatives of Mexico, the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Russian Federation in connection with the video-teleconference on "Peace and security in Africa: addressing root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa" convened on Wednesday, 19 May 2021.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members for this video-teleconference, the following delegations and entities submitted written statements, copies of which are also enclosed: Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Ethiopia, the European Union, the Holy See, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malta, Pakistan, the Peacebuilding Commission, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates and Zimbabwe.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Zhang Jun**
President of the Security Council



Annex 1**Briefing by the Secretary-General, António Guterres**

I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the important subject of addressing the root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa.

Since the start of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, I have warned of the risks that it poses to people and societies around the world, especially in countries affected by conflict. The series of policy briefs I issued last year included one that focuses only on the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on Africa.

That was the backdrop to my appeal for a global ceasefire to enable us to focus on our common enemy: the virus. My call was welcomed by many Governments and armed groups, including many in Africa, and is more relevant than ever as we face continued chronic violence in some countries and the re-emergence of old conflicts in others.

Violent extremist groups in Western and Central Africa and Mozambique, including those associated with Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, have continued, and even increased, their heinous attacks on civilians, creating additional major challenges for societies and Governments. The recent attacks in Cabo Delgado and the increasing insecurity caused by the Allied Democratic Forces in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo are tragic reminders of that serious threat.

Since the start of the pandemic, my Special Representatives and Envoys across the continent have stepped up their efforts to enhance conflict prevention and advance peace negotiations in line with the African Union Silencing the Guns initiative. Last month, for example, my Special Representative for Central Africa, François Louncény Fall, travelled to N'Djamena and met key Chadian and regional stakeholders to promote peaceful, inclusive and consensual processes for a return to constitutional order following the death of President Deby Itno. The outreach of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya through virtual meetings with women, young people and civic leaders was central to our support for the ongoing political dialogue.

Throughout the past year, the Peacebuilding Commission has worked closely with the African Union and regional economic communities to create space for national and regional leaders to share their experiences and seek support to build back better from the pandemic. My Peacebuilding Fund has adjusted its work in response to the pandemic to support national crisis-management efforts, social cohesion, dialogues and inclusive approaches and to counter hate speech and disinformation.

Many communities and countries on the African continent already face a complex peace and security environment. Risk factors include long-standing inequalities, poverty, food insecurity, environmental degradation, urbanization and demographic pressures.

Climate disruption is a further crisis multiplier. Where climate change dries up rivers, reduces harvests and destroys critical infrastructure, it displaces communities, leaves people susceptible to recruitment by criminal gangs, violent extremists and armed groups and increases the risks of instability.

Some countries are in a vicious cycle, in which conflict breeds poverty and fragility, which, in turn, decreases the resilience of those societies and the prospects for peace.

One year into the COVID-19 pandemic, as we face the possibility of an uneven recovery, it is clear that the crisis is feeding many of those drivers of conflict and instability.

The severe economic fallout of the pandemic is already aggravating tensions. Globally, the crisis has pushed an additional estimated 114 million people into extreme poverty.

Economic growth on the African continent has slowed, estimated at 3.4 per cent in 2021, as compared to 6 per cent globally. Remittances are drying up and debt is mounting.

In the name of fighting the crisis, some Governments have restricted democratic processes and civic space.

In several countries, the pandemic has gone hand in hand with divisive rhetoric, hate speech, incitements to violence and harmful misinformation, which has exacerbated divisions and further eroded trust.

The severe impact of the pandemic on young people, especially in Africa, the youngest continent, is contributing to increased risks. The loss of opportunities for education, employment and income drive a sense of alienation, marginalization and mental-health stress, which can be exploited by criminals and extremists.

The pandemic continues to deepen existing gender inequalities. Women account for more than 50 per cent of the low-wage, labour intensive jobs in retail, hospitality and tourism, which may never come back as companies embrace automation.

COVID-19 threatens the hard-won gains in terms of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all areas of social, economic and political life, including peace processes. I urge Member States to make proactive efforts to include women and young people when shaping post-pandemic recovery. Guaranteeing equal opportunities, social protection, access to resources and services and inclusive and meaningful participation in decision-making are not simply moral and legal obligations; they are a necessary condition for countries to exit the conflict trap and get firmly on the pathway of peace and sustainable development.

Recovery from the pandemic offers an opportunity to address the root causes of conflict, put prevention at the forefront of our efforts and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union. The entire United Nations system across the African continent is working to support such goals.

African Governments themselves have shown a great commitment to fighting the pandemic by establishing the Africa Regulatory Taskforce for a unified continent-wide approach.

However, limited supply and access to vaccines and insufficient support for the pandemic response are now hampering and delaying the recovery. Out of 1.4 billion doses administered around the world today, only 24 million have reached Africa — less than 2 per cent.

Equitable and sustainable vaccine roll-out worldwide is the quickest path towards a fast and fair recovery. That requires the sharing of doses, removing export restrictions, ramping up local production and fully funding the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator and its COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility.

The United Nations is advocating everywhere for a coordinated global effort on vaccines and for measures to alleviate the debt burden that threatens to cripple

the recovery in many low- and middle-income developing countries, particularly in Africa. I welcome the record allocation of special drawing rights by the International Monetary Fund. That must come with a reallocation so that liquidity reaches countries in need and they can avoid additional problems.

I also commend the extension of the Group of 20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative and the Common Framework for Debt Treatments. However, eligibility must be expanded to all vulnerable developing countries, including middle-income countries, which still borrow at premium rates and risk debt distress. In the longer term, we urgently need to strengthen and reform the international debt architecture.

Our United Nations country teams and peacekeeping and political missions are working closely with national Governments, the African Union, regional economic communities and international financial institutions to counter the spread of the virus and put inclusion, resilience and climate action at the forefront of efforts to rebuild economies and societies.

In January, I appointed a Special Coordinator for development in the Sahel. His efforts will address the important nexus among peace, security and development. In Central Africa, we are working with Governments and the Economic Community of Central African States to implement the regional strategy to address the COVID-19 pandemic and alleviate its socioeconomic impact.

Our communications campaigns and peacekeeping missions are helping to address rumours and disinformation. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Radio Okapi is providing factual information about COVID-19 in local languages.

Across the continent and around the world, our Verified initiative is providing science-based narratives to help people stay safe, stay hopeful and help one another. The pandemic has shown that we are only as strong as our weakest link and that we will achieve recovery only in solidarity. A sense of shared vulnerability must translate into a common purpose as we strive to overcome fragmentation and nationalism, address the root causes, drivers and sources of conflict and crisis, shape a strong recovery and build a better future for all.

No other continent is more important in that effort than Africa, and we rely on the Security Council's support.

Annex 2**Briefing by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission,
Moussa Faki Mahamat**

Let me first of all congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May and thank you for this opportunity to brief the Council on African concerns and views on this very important subject matter of addressing the root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa. On behalf of the African Union (AU) Commission, I welcome the Security Council's initiative under the presidency of China to organize this debate with such a crucial theme.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic will continue to have a profound impact on the economic and social development of Africa and in particular on affected countries, which already have vulnerable socioeconomic systems, devastated by conflicts and fragile political processes. Indeed, the trends continue to show a rising trajectory in the number of infected people and resulting fatalities.

At the onset of the pandemic, Africa adopted its own strategy to resist the scourge. The African Union Commission, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, special envoys and member States synchronized various actions, leading to the rescue of millions of African lives.

Today the biggest challenge that Africa is facing is the vaccine issue. It is a very big mistake to think that the world may be secure while the African continent is still lacking protection against the virus and its variants. Can we forget that the world is globalized and that the pandemic is profoundly so too?

On the political front, there have been challenges in sustaining the necessary political processes for implementing transitions and peace agreements on the ground to avoid a collapse of many African nations. The efforts of the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council need to focus on conflict-affected countries and continue to encourage and nurture the political processes being undertaken to ensure the sustained progress of political transitions and the implementation of peace agreements. The Sudan, Mali, Libya and Chad are examples of our deep concerns in that area of transitional processes.

On the economic front, slowed economic growth, lower levels of international trade, lower demand for Africa's primary exports, rising external debt and rising inflation have created an economic situation that will impact negatively on the socioeconomic situation in many African countries. In that regard, 20 African countries face the risk of collapse because of the burden of debt. That will require new thinking and initiatives aimed at post-pandemic recovery. I would like to stress that an economic recovery strategy should focus more on an economic stimulus and debt restructuring, and not on austerity.

On the social front, the situation is also urgent and requires immediate attention. The global travel bans, and national lockdowns have generated a socioeconomic crisis, which has led to the disruption of economies and affected both formal and informal employment sectors, leading to massive job losses, rising inflation and a real deterioration in living standards. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the delivery of services has been severely impacted, leading to serious threats to livelihoods, which could trigger rising frustrations and growing social discontent.

The economic consequences of the pandemic on Africa's small and medium enterprises and the informal sector, notably in conflict-affected countries, such as those in transition processes, have resulted in massive job losses. That is likely to have an impact on the return-to-school initiatives, as most parents lack the means to send children to school. The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a devastating

impact on the capacities of public hospitals in such countries, endangering the lives of citizens suffering from other chronic diseases. Allow me now to emphasize three points to which I want to draw the Council's attention.

First, in the immediate term, we need more coordination in the distribution of vaccines and manufacturing programmes. That is of urgent and immediate concern. The United Nations and the AU can assist Governments of conflict-affected countries to ensure that existing efforts in the fight against the pandemic are well coordinated, in particular in relation to the financial, technical and logistical assistance for the provision of vaccines.

There is an urgent need to put an end to vaccine protectionism and vaccine nationalism threatening to exclude low-income and fragile countries, thereby endangering the socioeconomic recovery of affected African countries.

In that regard, I highly commend the efforts of African Union leaders in establishing the COVID-19 Response Fund, aimed at raising resources to strengthen the continental response to COVID-19 notably by mitigating the pandemic's socioeconomic and humanitarian impact on African populations. The international community is strongly called upon to support the endeavours of the AU Response Fund aimed at supporting the efforts of African countries to launch their vaccination programmes.

I also reiterate the African Union's call to ensure debt relief in favour of African countries, taking into consideration the unique circumstances of countries that have lost revenues and existing reserves to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Secondly, in the short term, there is a need to exert institutional efforts in advocating for greater flexibility in the financing of national socioeconomic stimulus programmes. We stress the need for concerted efforts by international financial institutions and partners, as well as the African Development Bank, in this area. I wish to reiterate that the post-pandemic recovery should lay emphasis fundamentally on economic recovery led by job creation, the provision of credit to small and medium-sized enterprises and rebuilding sustainable livelihoods in the sectors that have borne the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would also like to emphasize that we should take full advantage of the strategic partnership between our two organizations, the AU and the United Nations. In this regard, the AU Commission and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission should further strengthen their coordination on the various aspects of support to the African countries concerned with post-conflict reconstruction and development in order to optimize and maximize the efficiency of this support and its positive impact.

Thirdly, in the medium to long term, we must not lose the momentum gained before the pandemic on the nexus between peace, security and development as expressed in Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which have clearly articulated long-term goals. In this regard, I invite the international community to support the African Continental Free Trade Area, which is experiencing significant progress, aimed at guaranteeing the free movement of goods and services among the various African countries.

Finally, I reiterate the call of the Secretary-General for all belligerents, wherever they are, to fully embrace and uphold the global ceasefire in order to facilitate efforts being deployed against the COVID-19 pandemic. In this connection, I call for the Security Council to consider a new approach and innovative ways to fund peace in Africa, as other organs and institutions in international fields are focusing on funding African development. It is time to know that peace is the sector that has the most important funding needs.

Annex 3**Briefing by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Achim Steiner**

It is a great privilege to speak on the topic of peace and security in Africa. Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat on his re-election as Chairperson of the African Union Commission. The United Nations, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), will continue to work closely with you as Africa builds forward better from this devastating pandemic.

Africa is a continent of unparalleled promise. It is home to nearly a third of global mineral reserves, nearly two thirds of the world's arable land and Earth's second-largest rainforest — in the Congo basin. Forty per cent of the world's solar energy potential, which will be fundamental for a global green energy transition, lies with Africa. And it is the continent of youth: over 70 per cent of the populations of many African countries are under the age of 30, a dynamic labour force with the potential to enhance development outcomes for decades to come. Yet much of this immense potential is yet to be realized.

Peace, security and development are intricately linked in Africa. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063 will require overcoming complex legacy issues and the challenges that compound them — political instability, weak governance institutions, burgeoning inequalities, a rollback on human rights and, now, two of the greatest challenges of this generation: the climate emergency and the unprecedented coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Building forward better will require local and global actors across the closely integrated disciplines of humanitarian response, development and peace to work together to address the root causes of conflict, as is the focus of this Security Council debate today.

I will focus my remarks on three critical questions today.

First, as a successful recovery will require keeping the pandemic under control, what is the situation at present, including when it comes to vaccine equity, fiscal space and the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, and what could the next steps be?

Secondly, as peace and sustainable development go hand in hand, what opportunities do we see around the green economy for countries and regions most affected by conflict to build forward better for people and the planet?

And thirdly, as good governance is a building block of a just and fair social contract, what can be done, and what is being done, to support State capacity, heal communities and create an inclusive future, especially for women and girls?

Permit me to take each one in turn.

A successful recovery will require keeping the pandemic under control. Currently, African countries account for a small fraction of the world's reported COVID-19 cases and fatalities relative to its population. This is partly due to the laudable efforts of many African Governments and institutions early in the pandemic.

However, the small percentages mask the crippling financial, social and political implications of COVID-19 on the continent. According to UNDP research this year, approximately six out of every 10 people who will become poor across the

globe will live in Africa. Already, some 40 million Africans have been pushed back into extreme poverty.

As the technical lead of the United Nations socioeconomic response to the pandemic, UNDP is focused on saving lives and livelihoods. Our analysis shows that an SDG push now — combining bold policy choices and investments in governance, social protection, digitalization and the green economy — could lift millions of Africans out of poverty by the year 2030.

One of the first and most important steps of an SDG push in and for Africa is to ensure vaccine equity. Africa's fragile and conflict-affected regions will get left behind unless decisive action is taken now. As of mid-May, the majority of African countries had less than 1 per cent of their populations vaccinated.

More support is urgently needed. Financing should not be the barrier. UNDP analysis shows that crushing debt could undermine the ability of African countries to fight the pandemic and build forward better from COVID-19, including their efforts to get vaccines into arms. By pushing the ratio of external debt to gross domestic product in Africa to an alarming 65 per cent, COVID-19 is constraining the fiscal space and making it much more difficult for Governments to make strategic investments.”

This week's conference on debt relief in the Sudan, convened by France, is an excellent example of how world leaders can come together to support the Sudan — in this instance in its historic political and economic transition — relieving the burden of debt to unlock development resources and unleash private sector potential as part of building peace.

In Africa the pandemic has triggered \$5 billion in capital outflows and widened the continent's development financing gap to \$345 billion. And yet less than 1 per cent of debt servicing in 2021 would cover the cost of 1 billion vaccine doses under the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access initiative.

As the United Nations lead development agency, UNDP is working with Governments, the United Nations family and other partners to support vaccine preparedness and deployment under the leadership of the World Health Organization and UNICEF. UNDP's development offer focuses on strengthening systems and governance to promote equity, resilience and sustainability in COVID-19 vaccination efforts across Africa.

In Equatorial Guinea, for example, UNDP is supporting the Government to put in place a digital system to strengthen vaccine distribution and supply chains. In Chad, Libya and Mali, UNDP is helping to establish e-health systems. These are not one-off interventions, but investments in systemic change that are robust enough to help countries face future health crises.

This brings me to my second point, which is the importance of building forward better with a greener economy. Financing will be critical to achieving these goals.

Our teams across Africa contributed to the development of over 40 country-led socioeconomic response plans, generating new insights to guide public policy decisions in a time of unprecedented complexity. They propose to invest some \$60 billion in helping Africa to build forward better and greener from the pandemic so that recovery drives progress towards the SDGs.

Today UNDP is supporting 26 countries in Africa to develop and implement integrated national financing frameworks — in cooperation with the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and other parts of the United Nations

system — to ensure that financing for the COVID-19 recovery is fully aligned with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

South Sudan, for example, is using the process of integrated national financing frameworks to strengthen national peace and planning dialogues and promote gender budgeting. Cabo Verde is using the frameworks to develop a blue economy platform with the stock exchange.

At the same time, through our Climate Promise, we are supporting 39 countries in Africa to make their nationally determined contributions more ambitious in line with green COVID-19 recovery efforts. We are supporting Governments to translate their nationally determined contributions into new green jobs and more ambitious efforts to tackle poverty, ensure equality for women and girls and build resilience to future shocks. In the Sudan, our Solar for Agriculture programme has created jobs, especially for women and youth.

Unemployment can fuel deep-seated tensions in regions such as the Sahel, Central Africa and the Horn of Africa — the same places where there is incredible potential to create new green jobs through carbon capture, energy trading and environmental protection. To this end, UNDP has partnered with the Tony Elumelu Foundation to strengthen the capacities of some 100,000 entrepreneurs in Africa over the next decade. In the Sahel region, this partnership has already trained over 5,000 young people, including the provision of seed capital to over 2,000 young people.

A new UNDP study found that the recently launched African Continental Free Trade Area will drive sustainable economic development throughout the African continent, so long as it is accompanied by respect for human rights and environmental protection, particularly for women and youth. To help harness this massive potential, the new UNDP Borderlands Centre in Kenya will serve the 270 million people living in Africa's border regions.

One challenge will be to connect African innovators with the potential opportunities that the African Continental Free Trade Area may open up — a challenge that UNDP's Accelerator Labs network — the world's largest and fastest learning development network, about one third of which sits in Africa — is already working on with local innovators and entrepreneurs.

And UNDP has signed a new strategic partnership with the African Continental Free Trade Area secretariat “to promote trade as a stimulus for Africa's socioeconomic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and as a driver of sustainable development.”

For Africa, a sustainable recovery must be powered by sustainable energy. Three quarters of the nearly 800 million people worldwide with no access to electricity live in sub-Saharan Africa; while, as a result of the pandemic, 100 million more Africans can no longer afford sustainable energy options.

As co-Chair of UN-Energy and the High-Level Dialogue on Energy, I join with the Secretary-General and a growing number of voices in calling for a year of action on energy towards clean, affordable energy for all by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050 to stop climate change. As we prepare for September's high-level dialogue on energy and the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow, I hope that all Member States will join together in support of this call.

And now to my third, critical, point: the importance of good governance as a building block of a fair and just social contract.

UNDP has a strong history of working closely with other development, humanitarian and peace actors to help societies tackle development emergencies,

prevent problems from escalating and build resilience to navigate the challenges yet to come.

Last year, in the Republic of the Congo, we trained journalists on women and children's rights and on resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, to enhance their capacity to work with international human rights instruments.

We supported 10 countries in Africa to carry out elections, including through the provision of technical support to election management bodies. Through our work with human rights and anti-corruption institutions, we helped Government systems to be more transparent, accountable and responsive.

In Angola and Zambia, for example, through the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law system, law enforcement officers were trained online on how to uphold human rights standards in policing during a state of emergency.

We examined why people exit armed conflict, including in Chad and Nigeria, and how to support their transition to civilian life, and took new approaches to building reconciliation and reintegration into peace agreements in the Central African Republic, Libya, the Sudan and South Sudan.

From all our experience on governance and resilience, with more than 50 per cent of our expenditure and 9 of our 10 largest country programmes in fragile and crisis contexts, we determined that, when you want to address the root causes of conflict, investing in development works.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, following the mediation efforts of civil society and local Government, supported by UNDP, young people formerly involved in conflict were nearly 40 per cent more likely to want to pursue vocational training or employment.

Today COVID-19 threatens to reverse hard-won stability gains, including in the Lake Chad basin region, and to expose vulnerable communities to a heightened level of economic instability. To address this crisis, UNDP has launched a Regional Stabilization Facility, building on our experience in stabilization in countries including Iraq and Libya. It has already supported Governments and affected local authorities to re-establish trust and law and order, opened up new channels for cross-border trade, improved security conditions for affected communities and enhanced access to livelihood options.

UNDP is working with the Governments of Mali, the Niger and Burkina Faso to replicate this experience in the tri-border area of Liptako Gourma. Supporting stabilization in these border areas brings communities together to fill the vacuum that enables radicalization and violent extremism, especially among young people.

At the onset of the pandemic, violent extremist groups in Africa seized the opportunity to spread misinformation aimed at sowing discontent. In response, UNDP scaled up support to 22 countries in Africa with a development preventative approach. In Somalia, for example, UNDP trained 240 religious leaders to help counter misinformation.

UNDP has established the Sahel Governance Promise, to be implemented over the next five years, in support of 10 Sahel countries identified by the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel as the most fragile countries and likely to be impacted by climate change.

UNDP does none of this alone; we work with the Peacebuilding Support Office on strengthening core government functions; with partners including the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the United Nations Environment Programme on climate-related security risks; with the International

Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on solutions for the record number of people forced from their homes, including as a result of climate change.

We look forward to the Council's continued support in taking this work forward.

Working with our partners from the United Nations system and beyond, UNDP has been a proud partner of Governments across Africa for decades.

We believe that building forward better from COVID-19 requires long-term investment in conflict prevention and “investing in hope”, and that development investment in vaccine equity, a green economy and good governance will deliver results.

In the wake of COVID-19, Africa has been at the heart of a surge of innovation — everything from sequencing the virus' genomes in Ghana to using digital finance in Nigeria to get cash transfers and social protection to people in need.

The challenge now is to sustain this surge, giving peacemakers, the innovators and the entrepreneurs — even and especially in conflict and crisis contexts — the “oxygen” they need to create new solutions with which to visualize and realize their bright future.

As ever, the entire United Nations system will be on hand to help.

Annex 4**Statement by the State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Wang Yi**

I thank His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres, Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat of the African Union Commission, and Administrator Achim Steiner of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for their remarks and briefings.

The world is undergoing the most serious pandemic in a century. No country is a fantasy land that can insulate itself from the virus, and no country should be left behind in the global response effort.

The purpose of China's proposal for this open debate is to urge the international community to pay attention to the severe challenges brought about by the pandemic to peace and development in Africa, build consensus and form synergies. It is aimed at getting the international community to work with African countries to defeat the virus, launch post-pandemic reconstruction, remove the root causes of conflicts and galvanize momentum towards lasting peace and sustainable development in Africa. China would like to offer four proposals.

First, we must help Africa reduce the gap in coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response. Africa has a crucial part to play in the global fight against COVID-19. What is pressing at the moment is to put up a line of defence against the virus in Africa. To this end, the international community should give Africa more assistance in terms of medical supplies, medicines, technology and funding. In particular, it should make vaccines accessible and affordable in Africa through various means, such as through grants, favourable purchases, technology transfer, and co-production. We call on the countries with the capacity to urgently provide vaccines to Africa. In the long run, the international community should help Africa enhance its public health capacity-building, strengthen its prevention and control systems, and build a global community of health for all. The United Nations should lead and coordinate in this process.

Secondly, we should help Africa tackle the peace deficit. COVID-19 has compounded conflicts and turmoil in some African countries, which have in turn taken a toll on the COVID-19 response across Africa. The United Nations and the African Union (AU) should coordinate closely with each other to ensure the progress of both initiatives: the global ceasefire and Silencing the Guns in Africa. There must be continued support for African countries in seeking African solutions for African problems. Regional and subregional organizations in Africa should be encouraged to further play their leading role in securing political settlement and in peace and reconciliation processes. It is important to actively channel peacekeeping funding to Africa and give greater support to AU peace operations in order to help Africa enhance its capacity to maintain peace and stability and fight terrorism.

More attention should be given to the important role of economic growth and social development in promoting peace so as to eliminate the breeding grounds of turbulence. Illegitimate external intervention in African countries must be resolutely rejected so as to prevent more problems and conflicts from arising. Relevant countries should lift their unilateral sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe, Sudan and other countries as soon as possible.

Thirdly, we need to help Africa narrow the development gap. Africa is a continent with great potential and promising prospects. The key is to support Africa in exploring a development path suitable to its national conditions. Developed countries should take meaningful steps on debt relief, development assistance and technology transfer, and fulfil their due international responsibilities. Development

partners should think creatively in light of the realities on the ground, help Africa accelerate the process towards industrialization and modernization, and help improve its capacity for self-sustained development and innovation. In addition, we should actively support to connect the world's industrial and supply chains with Africa and support the development of the African Continental Free Trade Area. The United Nations and the AU may step up coordination to synergize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 to ensure a one-plus-one-is-greater-than-two effect.

Fourthly, we must help Africa redress injustice in global governance. In the early days of the United Nations, only 4 of its 51 Member States at the time were from Africa. Today, 76 years later, African countries account for 54 seats, or more than a quarter of the United Nations membership. This is more of a qualitative change than just a quantitative increase for African countries seeking strength through unity. In the twenty-first century, the United Nations will not be able to hold its political or moral ground if it fails to pay attention to peace in Africa or to help Africa with its development. Without the support and participation of African countries, United Nations undertakings will not thrive. Equality of rights, equality of opportunities and equality of rules will not be achieved if African countries do not have greater representation and a stronger voice. This is what true multilateralism is essentially about.

China is a good brother, good friend and good partner to African countries. China never steps away from anything as long as it is good for African countries. And China never hesitates to undertake anything as long as it is good for the African people.

China is always a staunch supporter for Africa's fight against COVID-19. In response to the pandemic, the 46 Chinese medical teams based in Africa stood up to the challenge instantly in support of local response efforts. China has sent 15 ad hoc medical expert teams to Africa and swiftly set up a cooperation mechanism for Chinese hospitals to pair up with 43 African hospitals. They have brought containment experience, solutions and supplies to Africa. China has been and is providing vaccines to over 30 African countries on the basis of their urgent need.

China is always an active contributor to Africa's development and rejuvenation. From the TAZARA Railway to Belt and Road cooperation, China-Africa cooperation has delivered fruitful results for seven decades. In recent years, China and Africa have jointly launched 10 major cooperation plans and eight major initiatives, taking their practical cooperation to a new level. China has fully implemented the Group of Twenty's Debt Service Suspension Initiative, signed or reached agreement with 16 African countries on debt service suspension and cancelled the debts of 15 African countries in the form of interest-free Government loans that were due to mature by the end of 2020, within the framework of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

China is always a strong defender of Africa's peace and stability. The Chinese navy fleets have carried out 37 missions to escort vessels passing through the Gulf of Aden. As we speak, 2,043 Chinese peacekeepers are in Africa, working day and night for the peace of the continent. China will continue to speak up for Africa at the United Nations and urge all parties to respect African countries' sovereignty, respect the development paths independently chosen by African countries and respect African countries' right to equal participation in international affairs.

Development is the foundation and the key to resolving all issues. It is the shared responsibility of the international community to support Africa's development. Facing a once-in-a-century pandemic, China and Africa are ready to jointly launch the Initiative on Partnership for Africa's Development. It calls on the international

community to give stronger support to Africa in such areas as COVID-19 response and reconstruction, trade and investment, debt relief, food security, poverty alleviation, climate change and industrialization, and put resources into places where Africa has the most urgent need, so as to help the continent overcome difficulties and make strides forward. We look forward to more countries and international organizations getting on board, particularly Africa's traditional cooperation partners, in line with the principle of African ownership, equality and openness, in a bid to enhance coordination and cooperation, practice true multilateralism and galvanize strong support for Africa's development.

Africa is an important member of the global family. A peaceful, stable and prosperous Africa will contribute more to human progress. China will continue to stand firmly by the side of our African brothers through all challenges, work with global partners to support Africa's peace and security and build a community with a shared future for humankind.

Annex 5**Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad of Tunisia, Othman Jerandi**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I should like to thank the People's Republic of China for devoting today's meeting to a discussion of how to address the root causes of conflict in Africa while also tackling the challenges associated with recovering from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, a topic of major importance at this critical juncture.

I must also take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the People's Republic of China to support the development processes of African countries through several bilateral and multilateral initiatives, most recently the Initiative on Partnership for Africa's Development.

I thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his valuable briefing and ongoing efforts since the outbreak of the pandemic to ensure that the Organization plays a pivotal and effective role in addressing the repercussions of the pandemic for countries and peoples.

I commend Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme on their important briefings.

No people or country has been spared the new reality imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has contributed to deepening existing crises and conflicts and created new difficulties at various levels. As such, the pandemic is, without a doubt, one of the most significant challenges faced by the United Nations and the Security Council at present.

Since 9 April 2020, when the Security Council held its first consultations on the pandemic, it has become central to our deliberations, given that it is related, either directly or indirectly, to the various topics and situations on the Council's agenda.

While all agree that the pandemic has taken a catastrophic toll on health, with more than 3.4 million deaths and 160 million infections to date — alarming figures that will likely continue to climb — we believe that the next pandemic will pose even greater difficulties because the current one has had profound economic, social and security repercussions that will be felt for years to come.

Those repercussions will be more severe in developing countries and in fragile contexts, particularly in Africa, fuelling existing conflicts and complicating efforts to address their root causes.

It is no secret that those countries, which had already been facing significant economic, development and security challenges before the pandemic, are now in a more difficult position owing to their limited capacities and shrinking shares of foreign assistance and international cooperation, attributable, in turn, to the decline and recession of the global economy and the shift of financial resources in donor countries to economic rescue plans.

Consequently, countries in fragile contexts will have very slim chances of recovering if there is no immediate change in the way their situations are handled and if the necessary assistance is delayed, leaving them vulnerable to complications that could imperil their long-term stability and security.

Today, we are in need of a just and equitable global response to facilitating pandemic recovery — which our President Kaïs Saïed has called for since the beginning of last year — so that disparities between peoples do not widen, lest the effects of the pandemic on certain peoples become too severe to remedy later.

Tunisia therefore calls for prompt and effective measures to be adopted at two key levels:

First, we cannot discuss recovery efforts in the absence of a solution to the severe debt and liquidity issues that these countries face because of the pandemic. Such a solution would enable them to cope with health emergencies and strengthen their capacities to rescue pandemic-stricken economic sectors and invest in areas conducive to driving economic recovery.

In that connection, Tunisia once again calls for debt relief to be granted to the developing and least developed countries, and urges financial and donor institutions to respond urgently and fully to the Secretary-General's appeal for a paradigm shift in financial support for the developing and least developed countries by cancelling their debts.

Tunisia also supports the Secretary-General's call for the International Monetary Fund Debt Service Suspension Initiative to be extended and made available to middle-income countries so that States are not forced to choose between providing basic services to their citizens or paying off their debts. We hope that the rest of the international financial institutions, development funds and lending States will follow suit.

Secondly, now more than ever, in view of the critical health situation, it is necessary to develop an emergency universal mass vaccination programme so that no one is left behind. Recovery will be impossible unless equitable access to COVID-19 vaccination is guaranteed.

The development of the vaccine has given humankind new reason to hope that loss of life can be ended, normalcy restored and development processes placed back on track. However, not all peoples have shared in these aspirations, as the least developed countries are still being left behind.

In Africa, for example, no more than 2 per cent of the population of 1.3 billion has been vaccinated. Figures indicate that in only a few countries does the vaccination rate exceed 50 per cent and that only 10 countries have approximately 75 per cent of all COVID-19 vaccines between them. The Director-General of the World Health Organization has characterized this state of affairs as a “shocking imbalance in the global distribution of vaccines”, while other officials have spoken of a “vaccination gap”.

We therefore reiterate that it is vital to mobilize international cooperation and solidarity in order to ensure equitable access to vaccines for all. Doing so would render international efforts to address the pandemic more effective and establish the principle that no one is safe until all are safe.

While it is indeed important to support the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility mechanism to provide developing countries with vaccines, the scope and format of its current engagement have a long way to go to provide an equitable global response. We believe that the fastest way to achieve that is still by lifting restrictions on intellectual property rights so that vaccines can be manufactured in other countries, which would make it possible to yield the necessary quantity within the desired time frame.

In that connection, we note with satisfaction and optimism the positive statements made by a number of industrialized countries within the framework of the World Trade Organization. We hope that the ongoing talks will lead to decisions in that direction, allowing for the international solidarity and synergy that we sorely need to overcome this global crisis to materialize.

Our African continent, which we consider to be the pillar of the future of global security, stability and prosperity, has continue to be the victim of violence, conflicts and accumulating vulnerabilities that, by giving rise to complex and multidimensional challenges and threats, have mired the continent in a security, humanitarian, developmental and health emergency.

Confronted with the multiple and varied nature of those challenges, the Security Council should adopt a more comprehensive approach to international security that takes into account the intersecting nature of vulnerabilities on the one hand and the disastrous effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the other.

The United Nations, with its broad institutional framework and responsibilities, is now called upon to contribute effectively to addressing the root causes of the vulnerability that imperils peace and security, leading to violence and rampant conflict.

We urge the international community to contribute actively to meeting existing and emerging challenges as part of a joint, coordinated and integrated effort.

While we highly appreciate the important role that the African Union and subregional organizations have been playing in helping to address these situations, such as the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative, we call for national, regional and international efforts to be integrated.

Lastly, in the light of such circumstances, Tunisia reiterates its call for further strengthening international cooperation in dealing with the repercussions of the unprecedented pandemic. Such cooperation should be based on human solidarity, taking into consideration all factors that exacerbate and extend conflicts, especially in view of the fact that pandemics do not recognize borders, do not exclude anyone, and have left the world in a fragile state that we cannot confront in isolation from one another.

Annex 6**Statement by the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France,
Jean-Yves Le Drian**

[Original: French]

For more than a year now, we have been plunged into a crisis that has reminded us that solidarity is not just a requirement for justice but also an imperative for efficiency, because our health, our planet and our security are common goods that we can defend only together. That is why the international community has a responsibility to support the most fragile States, both to help them address the root causes of the crises they are going through and to build, with them, the path to sustainable and inclusive recovery. I am thinking in particular of our partners on the African continent, where a considerable part of our common future is at stake. We all know this.

Our first priority must be to ensure equitable and universal access to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccines for all Africans, who deserve more than pronouncements and vaccine nationalism. These vaccines must become, very concretely, a new global public good. The health of the African continent depends upon it; our health depends upon it.

Within the framework of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator initiative, financed at more than €2.4 billion by the European Union and its member States, the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility has already allowed for the distribution of nearly 19 million doses of vaccine to 42 African States. France is proud to have been the first country to provide COVAX not only with financial support, but also with additional doses, which were allocated according to the equitable framework set by the World Health Organization. Thanks to that, Mauritania had benefited from 100,000 doses as of April. Four other African countries will also be able to benefit from French dose donations by the end of the month, managed by COVAX, in addition to the COVAX allocations. As stated by President Macron, our goal is to provide COVAX with at least 500,000 donated doses by June.

We must ensure that front-line personnel are rapidly vaccinated. Of course, that includes African health workers. That is why there was an appeal by France to its partners in February to request 13 million donations of doses to respond to this need. Those front-line personnel also include Blue Helmets; their vaccination is also a very important issue that we are carefully following.

Within the framework of the COVID-19 Tools Accelerator initiative, a charter was adopted in November at France's initiative to emphasise the importance of equitable access to vaccines. Equitable access requires a necessary discussion on the issue of intellectual property. Above all, it requires the lifting of major impediments such as restrictions on the export of vaccine components. This is very important. Our approach for several months now has been to work concretely on the blocking factors, namely, factories and know-how.

Our second priority must be to support African peace and security initiatives. In the Sahel, a civil and political surge is necessary to ensure a return of the State and the deployment of basic services in the most vulnerable areas, in addition to military efforts, which must continue thanks to the surge of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. This surge must be supported with increased and sustainable support, financed by mandatory contributions. The Sahel countries have clearly expressed their needs; the Security Council must meet them.

With African States and African regional organizations, we must also focus on the fight against impunity, good governance and respect for human rights, all of which are the conditions for stability and prosperity, to which the people of Africa and the entire world legitimately aspire. The democratic transition under way in the Sudan, with international support confirmed by the conference held this Monday in Paris, shows that real progress is possible.

Finally, we must remain fully mobilized to support Africa on the path to sustainable development. This is all the more important given that the current crisis has unfortunately exacerbated poverty, inequality and food insecurity. The Summit on Financing African Economies, held yesterday in our capital, allowed the international community to contribute pragmatic responses to the financing needs of African States and to the structural underinvestment affecting the African private sector, with a view to breaking the cycle of over-indebtedness that holds back the entire continent and laying the groundwork for robust economic recovery in Africa.

At the Summit, it was decided that an unprecedented emergency financial package would be released, based in particular on the issuance of \$650 billion in special drawing rights, with \$34 billion directly benefiting African public finances. The Summit also made it possible to lay the foundations for a mechanism allowing the special drawing rights of developed countries to contribute to the financing of African economies.

Sustainable development in Africa also comprises flagship projects such as the Great Green Wall project, to which the One Planet Summit last January gave new impetus. Collectively, we have managed to mobilize €16 billion to fight desertification while promoting employment through the Great Green Wall project.

On all these subjects, France will continue to stand with Africa in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and responding to the challenges it faces.

Annex 7**Statement by the Minister for External Affairs of India, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar**

Let me begin by congratulating State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs Wang Yi and China on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. The initiative to hold an open debate on peace and security in Africa, addressing the root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery, is a timely one. I take this opportunity to share India's views.

The strong and deep solidarity between India and Africa reflects the bonding of the global South. Our close collaboration is expressed through the India-Africa Forum Summit, as in the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement. But nowhere is this more evident than in the United Nations itself. It is a matter of continuing regret for us that the voice of Africa is not given its proper due in this most pivotal institution. Our support for the common African position, as stated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, is sincere and unambiguous. That is why the issue of reformed multilateralism should be given utmost priority.

Like the rest of the world, Africa, too, is being tested by the coronavirus disease pandemic. Its vulnerabilities are greater and, in many respects, its capabilities still in the making. The world must stand by Africa in this crisis. For its part, India has done so by supplying medicines, vaccines and health-related equipment. We are also working in partnership with South Africa to address the challenges of accessibility and affordability of vaccines.

Beyond the pandemic, Africa's recovery will be facilitated by partnerships that genuinely address its economic sustainability. India's approach was spelt out by the Kampala principles enunciated by Prime Minister Modi in 2018. In effect, India will respond to the priorities of Africa, as defined by Africans themselves. Our support is without conditionalities and in line with African expectations. This is visible in our 189 projects in 41 African countries being implemented under concessional loans. It is expressed in our providing medicines, health equipment, ambulances, books, vehicles and food grains — or, indeed, in the vocational training and information technology centres set up in Africa; in the 43,000 education and training slots over the past five years; or in the digital education and health programmes with 17 African partners. Our trade and technology exchanges are steadily growing, in line with closer political and people-to-people ties.

Like the rest of the world, Africa, too, faces challenges of terrorism and instability. It is a reminder to this Council of why epicentres of radicalization must not be allowed to operate with impunity. India's support to Africa is expressed through our peacekeeping presence in South Sudan, Somalia, Abyei, Western Sahara and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We endorse the call of the Secretary-General for a mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to support African counter-terrorism operations with sustained financing, including through assessed contributions.

Bilaterally, India has partnered in the establishment of defence institutions in Nigeria, Ethiopia and Tanzania. Our training teams have been deployed in Botswana, Namibia, Uganda, Lesotho, Zambia, Mauritius, Seychelles and Tanzania. When humanitarian assistance and disaster relief situations have arisen, such as in Mozambique in 2019, India has been there for Africa.

We support peacebuilding in Africa, establishing capabilities and capacities that help meet challenges while also ensuring progress. Most of all, we understand and empathize with the aspirations of Africa. That is why India will support peace and security there, help address the root causes of conflict and be a reliable partner in fighting the pandemic.

Annex 8**Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, Bui Thanh Son**

I thank you, Sir, and the Chinese presidency for convening this important meeting. I am grateful to Secretary-General Guterres and other briefers for their insightful remarks.

Africa has long been considered the cradle of human civilization, blessed with abundant resources and unmatched potential. But centuries of slavery and colonialism have dragged the continent into poverty, underdevelopment and conflicts that are still prevalent today. It is unfortunate that a continent as great as Africa accounts for more than half of the items on the agenda of the Security Council.

I therefore applaud Minister Wang Yi for bringing Council members together to deliberate ways to address the root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa. Indeed, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has severely worsened Africa's socioeconomic prospects. It has exacerbated ongoing conflicts and undermined efforts to address the root causes of these conflicts. As global efforts are geared towards post COVID-19-pandemic recovery, Africa must not lag behind, or be left behind.

I share the view of Secretary-General Guterres that "Africa's challenges can only be solved by African leadership". That leadership has been reflected in Africa's Agenda 2063, which aspires to achieve an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens. And that leadership is indispensable in the implementation of that Agenda, as well as the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. But Africa cannot and must not do it alone. International support and assistance are essential for Africa to achieve its aspirations and goals set out in Agenda 2063. Allow me to underline three critical areas.

First, peace, stability and security are the prerequisites for addressing the current challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and achieving sustainable development in Africa. It is critical to fully implement resolutions 2352 (2017) and 2565 (2021), particularly their calls for a global ceasefire and a durable and extensive humanitarian pause. We must continue to support Africa's Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative and efforts to strengthen confidence-building and dialogue in conflict prevention and resolution.

Secondly, if peace is to be sustained, much needs to be done to reduce poverty and inequality and address underdevelopment and social injustice. It is also essential to focus on building trust and reconciliation among communities, promote the meaningful participation of women and youth in peace processes, post-conflict peacebuilding and post-pandemic recovery. And to cope with current and future pandemics and health crises, it is vitally important to strengthen Africa's public health systems. Viet Nam calls on the international community to strengthen efforts to ensure equal access to COVID-19 vaccines for developing countries, including African countries.

Thirdly, close partnership between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in Africa, particularly the African Union (AU), has undoubtedly served as an important framework for the provision of financial, humanitarian and technical assistance to conflict-affected countries in Africa. The Security Council and the United Nations system should strengthen their engagement with the AU, to support the implementation of Agenda 2063 and ensure the effective deployment and operation of United Nations peace operations and peacebuilding initiatives.

Special bonds have been forged between Viet Nam and the peoples of Africa. We share a history of struggle against colonialism, for independence and freedom. And as President Ho Chi Minh put it, we rejoice at Africa's victories and it pains us to see Africa's sufferings.

This is why Viet Nam has always stood shoulder to shoulder with our African brothers and sisters in our common endeavours for sustainable peace and development. Vietnamese peacekeepers are present in conflict zones in the Central African Republic and South Sudan. Our development experience and expertise have been widely shared with African nations through years of bilateral and trilateral cooperation. More recently, Vietnamese medical supplies and face masks have been sent to Africa in support of the fight against the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. And, as a member of the Security Council, we have worked tirelessly to help find ways to resolve conflicts and sustain peace in Africa. We are committed to doing more to contribute to the goal of peace, security and development in Africa.

Annex 9**Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defense of Ireland, Simon Coveney**

I would like to thank China for convening this important debate. I would also like to thank our briefers, Secretary-General Guterres, Administrator Steiner and Chairperson of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat.

I am pleased that we are adopting a presidential statement on this important issue today (S/PRST/2021/10).

Peace and security in Africa have been central to Ireland's partnership with the continent since the deployment of Irish United Nations peacekeepers to the Congo in 1960. Today, Irish women and men are serving in three United Nations peacekeeping and five European Union peace-support missions across the continent of Africa. Africa remains an important focus of our international development programme and we will continue to expand our engagement in the coming years.

I would like to make three points in our debate today.

My first point is on common challenges and fragility. There is no doubt, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has worsened inequality. It is having an uneven impact and compounding challenges for the most vulnerable of people. Our efforts to respond in a collective and coherent manner have been insufficient. National approaches are essential in protecting our people. But, if we are to put the pandemic behind us, it must be addressed everywhere at the same time, where possible.

Ireland is therefore fully committed to efforts by the United Nations system to deliver COVID-19 vaccines in a fair, transparent and efficient way. As part of the €100 million being provided to support global public health this year, Ireland is contributing bilaterally to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility and we will do a lot more as the year goes on. We also support it as a member of the European Union, which to date has contributed €860 million to the Facility and exported over 200 million doses of vaccine.

While responding to the pandemic, we must also keep a focus on strengthening wider public health systems, especially in conflict settings.

Another shared vulnerability is the impact of climate change. This is felt nowhere more acutely than across the continent of Africa. We have seen in the Sahel, particularly in the countries around Lake Chad, how conflict and climate combine to diminish access to natural resources. Across the Horn of Africa, the multiple and repeated shocks of drought and flooding undermine community resilience and livelihoods, creating drivers that armed groups exploit.

During our term on the Security Council, and as co-chair of the informal expert group on climate and security, we will work to ensure that we recognize and act on climate-related security risks, which will only become more pressing in the years to come.

Sustainable and transparent management of natural resources is also essential. Illegal exploitation of and trade in natural resources is a significant driver of conflict in Africa. Regional economic cooperation and integration can play a key role in reversing this dynamic.

I commend the African Union and Africa's regional economic communities for their progress in supporting socioeconomic development. Ireland is committed to supporting this work, including through implementation of the African Continental

Free Trade Area, which has enormous potential to drive positive economic development and employment.

My second point relates to upholding the principles and responsibilities that are essential to our shared humanity. When this Council speaks, it can make a real difference for people in conflict situations. Parties to the conflict must comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law. We must act in calling out those who are failing to live up to their obligations and legal responsibilities.

Since the start of the year, the Council has responded to developments in Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. We have spoken out for people in need of humanitarian support, people at risk of violence and people suffering grave human rights violations.

I remain deeply concerned by the ongoing conflict in Tigray, which has seen many people killed, injured and displaced, and which is feeding into instability across the Horn of Africa.

The promotion and protection of human rights for all, gender equality, and the rule of law must be meaningfully integrated into pandemic-recovery strategies. This is key to addressing the root causes of conflict and supporting sustainable development at the same time.

The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls, who must be at the heart of COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery. Advancing gender equality, and ensuring meaningful youth engagement, can drive transformative recovery and accelerate progress on peace, security and development. All three of those need to be the pillars of what we do together.

Supporting good governance must also be at the heart of recovery in Africa. Its absence fosters inequality and grievances over access to land, power and resources, and can lead to a culture of impunity.

My third and final point relates to how we work together to deliver shared solutions. The triple nexus of peacebuilding, humanitarian action and sustainable development must be central to our recovery efforts. The Peacebuilding Commission's comprehensive approach to supporting recovery, which recognizes the unique challenges facing people in conflict-affected areas, is an example of the nexus approach in action.

Peacekeeping operations will continue to play a critical role in preserving peace, preventing the resurgence of conflict and protecting civilians.

When the time comes for peacekeepers to leave, though, we must be fully prepared for their transition by putting in place the resources and planning to preserve the peace that they leave behind.

We must do better at linking peacekeeping to peacebuilding, ensuring continued support for countries emerging from conflict and finding long-term solutions to the causes of those conflicts in the first place.

The women and peace and security agenda has been a key priority for Ireland for many years. That is an agenda with an African heart. Namibia shepherded the landmark first resolution, 1325 (2000), and Africa continues to show the way in implementing through innovations like the African Women Leaders Network and FemWise.

Transforming our post-pandemic world demands that we silence the guns and amplify the voices of women peacebuilders. The meaningful participation of civil

society in peacebuilding is also essential to its long-term success. We know that only too well in my own country.

We must prioritize cooperation with regional organizations, whose context-specific knowledge and capabilities can help prevent and resolve conflict. The root causes of conflict in Africa, which often cross borders, cannot be addressed effectively without coordination with the African Union, regional economic communities and other regional initiatives. Nobody knows Africa better than African communities themselves.

The COVID pandemic demonstrates our global fragility and our shared responsibility to act. It reminds us that the challenges facing African countries due to conflict and fragility are not theirs alone. They are shared challenges for us all. We must renew our efforts to put in place a strong, global response to the pandemic while working together to tackle the root causes of conflict.

Annex 10**Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Eva-Maria Liimets**

First, I would like to thank the briefers, Mr. António Guterres, Mr. Achim Steiner and Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, for their input into today's meeting.

We have lived with the pandemic for one and a half years now, and we are still seeing record-breaking numbers of new infections in many countries. We must continue to work collectively to overcome the pandemic and assist the ones who need it the most. During the pandemic we must not ignore the root causes of conflict, which have been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Post-pandemic recovery is of crucial importance, as it will make us more resilient in future.

For the recovery to be meaningful, we need to follow certain criteria. We must ensure unhindered humanitarian access to conflict areas. We hereby reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and for resolution 2265 (2016). It is crucial for the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccines as well as for other immunization programmes. Moreover, we will never stop underlining the importance of good governance, accountability, compliance with international humanitarian law, protection of human rights and respect for the rule of law, which all play a key role in the conflicts in Africa.

What can we do to help Africa build back better?

To help restore international trade, travel, prosperity and security, we must get COVID-19 under control. The European Union (EU) has played a leading role in setting up the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, through which we have exported close to 65 million doses. The EU and its member States have so far contributed more than €2.47 billion to the COVAX Facility.

In addition, Europe is the main exporter of vaccines worldwide. More than 200 million doses of vaccines produced in Europe have been shipped to the rest of the world. We are exporting almost as many vaccines as we deliver to our own citizens, to more than 90 countries. Africa has an ally in the EU in its COVID-19 response and recovery, ensuring safe and fair access to COVID-19 vaccines for all. The EU continues to support further international debt-relief efforts for African countries while being the largest contributor to date to the International Monetary Fund's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust. The EU also continues to explore ways to support the local manufacturing of vaccines, medicines and health products while also taking into account the mid- and long-term impacts of the pandemic on peace and stability.

From my country's perspective, Estonia recently adopted its first comprehensive strategy for Africa for the 2020-2030 period. Digital transformation, e-governance, innovation and a green transition are of particular importance. The pandemic has shown us how fragile we have been in many different fields, depending on solutions that have put our lives on pause. That can be solved through digitalization, especially during a time when we have become more reliant on technology. Simultaneously, interest in e-governance and e-services has steadily increased in Africa. It is the perfect time to act.

Unfortunately, increasing reliance on technologies goes hand in hand with malicious acts, which is why we are actively working with partners in African countries to promote cyber-resilience on the continent. Estonia is one of the founding members of the Digital for Development Hub and therefore at the forefront of promoting new international partnerships on the digital transformation of Africa. It

is a tool for advancing multi-stakeholder dialogue, joint partnerships and investments in the African digital economy.

Lately we co-hosted, together with the African Union, a hackathon entitled “EU: Africa Post Crisis Journey”. The goal was to find innovative digital solutions to socioeconomic challenges in Africa, further amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem for the youth on the continent. One of the most notable results was women’s empowerment, as there were many women entrepreneurs involved and the winning projects were geared towards women’s health.

In addition, Estonia is open to offering its expertise to Africa to help it reach its goals as set out in Agenda 2063. Estonia’s cooperation with African countries is based on relations between equal partners, and we call others to follow our example.

With each passing day, we continue to lose more people to the pandemic. It is critical for us to join forces for a coordinated approach. COVID-19 is still ravaging those with weaker health-care systems or groups in conflict situations, which means that the virus can spread to other countries. Let us hasten the vaccine rollout for a greater positive impact.

Annex 11**Statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Health of Kenya, Mutahi Kagwe**

I commend the Peoples' Republic of China, as President of the Security Council for the month of May, for having convened this timely debate. I also thank Their Excellencies Secretary-General António Guterres, Chairperson of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat and United Nations Development Programme Administrator Achim Steiner for their briefings.

Kenya sends its condolences to all those throughout the world who have lost family members and colleagues to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and wish those affected a quick recovery.

Let me begin by stating that Africa's peace and security challenges have become substantially more complex in recent years and therefore more difficult to manage because of the emergence of new threats such as climate change, migration, terrorism and violent extremism, among others.

Although Africa has been among the regions with relatively low numbers of coronavirus infections and fatalities, COVID-19 has shown us that we need to strengthen the capacities of African States and institutions to better respond to similar pandemics in future.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also made clear the need for Africa to invest in human security, especially in the areas of health and education. A greater focus on the people is needed in order to ensure that Africa has enough skilled workers.

Moreover, COVID-19 has also demonstrated that Africa has special needs and therefore must be integrated differently into the world economy, with a focus on value addition and manufacturing. A post-pandemic recovery plan for Africa must not be one that maintains the status quo but on that takes into account Africa's unique challenges.

The root causes of conflict in Africa relate to poverty and the unequal distribution of resources. COVID-19 has worsened poverty and heightened the competition for scarce resources, thereby exacerbating conflict and insecurity. We must therefore invest in the people if we are to make meaningful progress. Africa needs to focus on the creation of jobs for its youth, because their continued unemployment predisposes them to activities that have a negative impact on peace and security.

We must also focus on strengthening African States' capacity to reach and administer ungoverned spaces, build cohesion among its diverse peoples and embrace inclusion and empowerment in all spheres.

The Security Council should therefore pay more attention and support Africa's post-pandemic recovery. In that regard, Kenya advocates for the following.

It is key to boost the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility and enable easy access thereto by all African countries. That should include a waiver of intellectual property rights in order to enable mass production in Africa as well as the sharing of excess stockpiles. Also required is debt relief and debt restructuring to help countries mitigate the effects of COVID-19.

Investment in national and regional transport and energy infrastructure is vital in order to stimulate economic activity, enhance market access and create employment opportunities, as is the implementation of practical climate-change adaptation programmes that promote food security and environmental protection.

Finally, support is needed for social infrastructure development that will reduce poverty, minimize inequalities, improve social protection and enhance the participation of women and youth in all spheres of socioeconomic life.

In addition, we must strengthen existing mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution. A regional approach is critical, and therefore closer cooperation between the Council and the African Union must continue to be encouraged.

We also call for adequate resourcing through United Nations assessed contributions of all United Nations and United Nations-mandated peacekeeping missions, including the African Union Mission in Somalia. Most important, there is need to invest more in the safety and security of peacekeepers. Better-resourced members of the Council should also demonstrate leadership by contributing to the Peacebuilding Fund.

More important, we must speak and act in unison in tackling terrorism. As such, terrorists must be made to face the full force of the applicable international instruments. Kenya continues to call for the listing of Al-Shabaab under the sanctions regime established by resolution 1267 (1999).

In conclusion, I reaffirm that Kenya will continue to work with all members of the Security Council, the larger United Nations fraternity and other international partners in addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa.

Annex 12**Statement by the Minister of International Development of Norway,
Dag Inge Ulstein**

As we meet today, the pandemic continues to batter Africa with unrelenting force. It is exposing and exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. The virus is compounding the double impact of conflict and climate change and compounding the root causes of conflict. The pandemic is widening the poverty gap, undermining development gains, fuelling local conflicts and disrupting peace processes. It makes it harder to reach our goal of leaving no one behind and widens the trust gap.

The pandemic response has been used as a pretext to limit civil liberties and human rights and restrict democratic space. That is not the way to build trust; rather, it is a way to help the virus and curb future development. The pandemic must be met with leadership, partnership and a clear willingness to address the root causes of conflict and deal with the consequences of those root causes.

Causes and consequences alike must be met with collective action based on trust — trust between Governments and citizens, trust between the United Nations and the African Union (AU), trust among all of us around this table, and trust that we can continue to improve the fine architecture for multilateral cooperation that has been constructed since the Council was summoned for the first time.

The pandemic must be met with the kind of leadership and determination that the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States have demonstrated recently in Mali and in partnership with the United Nations in the Central African Republic.

However, climate change continues to change the conditions on the ground for the worse. Heatwaves and flooding are increasing in frequency, destroying harvests, destroying homes and transforming food security into a question of hard security. Tackling this issue requires the active involvement of those who will be affected the most.

That is why I am so happy to see young people all over the continent taking part in the global debate on climate action. I am pleased to see that many countries are stepping up their climate ambitions, as most recently seen in the Leaders' Summit on Climate, hosted by President Biden.

Navigating the pandemic so that we can emerge stronger will require strong partnerships to ensure that no one is left behind. Comprehensive attempts to limit the spread of the virus are hampered when State authorities are absent or too weak to play their designated role. Lack of stability makes it extremely challenging to roll out vaccines. Attacks on health-care institutions and personnel are unacceptable.

Creating trust in vaccination campaigns means creating trust in political leadership and institutions. We need to use the same rationale and approach to combat this pandemic as we use to build peace and promote sustainable development; we need to address the root causes of fragility and violence, and our approach must be long-term, dynamic, fair and inclusive.

I commend the AU for its role in the pandemic response, most notably the efforts of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. Beating the pandemic will also require global partnerships. Norway is doing its part by co-chairing the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator Facilitation Council together with South Africa. The AU initiative for a partnership for vaccine manufacturing will play a crucial role in increasing production of vaccines on the continent. We

must also work to remove any obstacles posed by conflict or weak infrastructure that will hinder vaccination campaigns after vaccines become available.

Building and sustaining peace will require strong partnerships in support of nationally owned solutions. The AU's normative work on democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law is essential. We encourage the AU to take further steps to resolve the conflict in Tigray. I also commend the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. National and local voices must be brought to the table and heard. Women's empowerment through meaningful participation is not just a self-evident human right. It is also a well-proven way to make peacebuilding effective.

This pandemic will not be over anywhere until it is over everywhere. We must fully acknowledge that post-pandemic recovery cannot wait, even as we increase our efforts to ensure vaccines for all. We must start planning now — addressing the root causes of conflict — through partnerships and preventive diplomacy. We need to build back better, not resume business as usual. Let us lay the foundations for sustainable peace and sustainable development. Let us fill the trust gaps, the poverty gaps, the gaps between humanitarian assistance and long-term development, and the education gaps.

We must remember what we all signed up for when agreeing on the Sustainable Development Goals — to leave no one behind. If we confront the root causes of conflict as well as their consequences, I believe that we can still eradicate extreme poverty before the decade is over.

Annex 13**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield**

I thank Foreign Minister Wang Yi for organizing today's discussion. Let me also welcome the Secretary-General, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, and thank them for their briefings.

I am thrilled that we are having a conversation today on peace, security and supporting post-pandemic recovery in Africa. Like the rest of the world, Africa today is confronted with several global crises, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and climate change, which have demonstrated how interconnected we are. The United States believes that we are connected not only by our challenges but also by our opportunities. Let us consider our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This path will be a long and very challenging one, but also demonstrates why the best and strongest partnerships are built on a foundation of trust, transparency, accountability and shared interests.

The decisive actions many African leaders took to combat the COVID-19 pandemic have saved countless lives. Were it not for their leadership, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and the health infrastructure and expertise built over the past decades, the effects of the pandemic could have been a lot worse. We are proud of the role we played in supporting those efforts. The United States has worked hand in hand with the Africa CDC since it was established in 2016. Together we have dedicated significant resources to preventing, detecting and responding to outbreaks of infectious diseases on the continent, creating an emergency operations centre and training epidemiologists and incident managers. This partnership follows over 20 years of United States investment and capacity-building in African health security.

Today the African continent is polio-free. For some countries, control of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is within sight. Mortality rates for children under 5 are down, and Ebola outbreaks have been contained. We are proud that our work together has saved the lives of millions and helped build the infrastructure for Africans to tackle future health threats like COVID-19.

In response to the current pandemic, the United States has delivered over \$570 million in economic support and humanitarian and health assistance. On Monday, President Biden announced that we will be donating 80 million COVID-19 vaccines by the end of June. We will work with the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility and other partners to ensure that their delivery and distribution is equitable and follows the science. They will go where they are needed most, and there will be no strings attached.

Another destabilizing force is climate change, which has continued to grow, disproportionately impacting countries and communities across Africa. The United States is doing our part to set aggressive goals to combat climate change, which is a source of conflict and food insecurity in countless places across the continent. We can and must work together to reduce environmentally driven conflicts, including local conflicts between farmers and herders and transboundary disputes over water.

Economic recovery will be a key piece of Africa's broader recovery from the pandemic. Before COVID-19 hit, African economies were some of the fastest growing in the world. Together, let us build them back better — with more equitable growth, more diversity, more market-based and transparent practices and with a focus on a climate-smart future. To that end, the United States supports the Paris Club-Group

of Twenty Debt Service Suspension Initiative and the Common Framework for Debt Treatment — both of which include debt-transparency requirements. We commend the financing efforts of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and we will be directly supporting the development of a plan for a \$650 billion IMF Special Drawing Rights allocation. Those investments will re-energize many of Africa's economies, which, we know, are primed for progress.

Finally, the United States continues to believe that democracy is the most powerful way to prevent all forms of conflict. If people have a voice and a vote, they are less likely to turn to violence. That is why, across Africa, we are supporting democracy and democratic values, holding Governments accountable and empowering people economically, educationally and politically, especially women and girls. Time and again, we see that gender equality reduces poverty, increases access to education, improves health access, fosters democracy and boosts economic growth.

More broadly, we have worked to expand partnerships built on a foundation of trust, transparency, accountability and areas of mutual opportunity across Africa. From people programmes like the Peace Corps, started in the 1960s, to the Young African Leaders Initiative, started in 2010, we continue as a nation to focus on people-to-people relations. The extraordinary success of the African diaspora community here enhances those relations, and programmes like the President's Malaria Initiative, the President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief and the Millennium Challenge Corporation build on those partnerships. Together we have collaborated on programmes across the continent that empower Africans and strengthen societies through good governance, strong democratic institutions and transparency.

That last point is important. We believe that our partners should know where all of our aid goes, what it delivers and who it benefits. That is our approach. I want to conclude by saying that the challenges Africa faces are great, but that Africa's promise is far greater. We are committed to working together, as partners, to propel that promise forward.

Annex 14**Statement by the Minister for Africa at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, James Duddridge**

I would like to thank State Councillor Wang Yi for convening this timely debate.

As we have heard today, this devastating pandemic presents fresh challenges to building a lasting peace across the African continent. The virus has disproportionately impacted those affected by conflict, particularly women, children, refugees and internally displaced persons. The challenges of recovery are numerous and interconnected. That is why we must adopt a comprehensive approach and work together on human rights, peace, security and development.

The United Kingdom has worked with all our international partners for equitable access to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccines for people around the world. Under our Group of Seven (G-7) presidency, the G-7 has doubled contributions to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility. Having committed \$770 million, we are proud to be one of the largest bilateral donors.

More than 160 million people are at risk of being excluded from these vaccination campaigns because of instability and conflict. A multilateral approach is the only viable way to ensure rapid, equitable access to safe and effective vaccines, including in conflict-affected areas through vaccination ceasefires.

However, as we consider pandemic recovery, we need to look beyond vaccines and consider how to ensure that everyone — particularly women, girls, the young and the excluded — has the opportunity to build their potential. That requires increased access to health care and ending preventable deaths. It requires quality education, which is why the United Kingdom is part of, and is indeed the largest global donor to, the Global Partnership for Education, which has reached 24 million children since 2015 — the majority of whom are in Africa. We look forward to joining our Kenyan friends at the Partnership's replenishment summit in July, and we call on all countries to step up their efforts in that regard.

Addressing health and education shortcomings will reduce poverty, but we must also address the undeniable links between poverty and conflict. By 2030, 80 per cent of the world's extreme poor will be living in fragile States. Climate change will continue to magnify that trend, driving food insecurity and drought and exacerbating conflict. That is why we have already pledged over \$15 billion in international climate financing over the next five years.

There is an opportunity to support Africa — not only for it to recover from the pandemic but to rebuild better than before. Unleashing the potential of women and young people is central to that endeavour. Health and education and climate support can change lives for the better only if it is not undermined by conflict.

We must therefore address the underlying grievances that cause people to take up arms. Development gains and fragile peace can be lost if large parts of the population are marginalized or human rights are not respected. That is why, for example, the United Kingdom places such importance in promoting the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and community leaders in elections and peace processes in Somalia. That is why ending the horrendous levels of sexual and gender-based violence that we are witnessing in Tigray is so very urgent.

Peace can only be built upon the foundations of strong institutions, the rule of law and open, inclusive societies. The United Nations and the African Union are stronger because they are working together better than ever before. Early

interventions, including by the African Union, will need to be coupled with long-term engagement and development programmes by the United Nations and its partners.

We have seen that in the Sudan, where Prime Minister Hamdok continues to make progress towards peace, prosperity and democracy. In Mali, the United Kingdom is supporting United Nations stabilization efforts and increasing the meaningful participation of women in the peace process through our peacekeeping deployment and by working with United Nations agencies to strengthen civil-military cooperation.

The United Kingdom also strongly supports the sustaining peace agenda, which utilizes an inclusive cross-pillar approach to peacebuilding that draws on the expertise of the whole United Nations system. We are proud to support the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, to which the United Kingdom has been a top donor, having donated £220 million since its inception.

In conclusion, there is more to do if we are to reduce the dangers that poverty, marginalization and the pandemic pose to African peace and development and, more generally, global stability. We need countries to come together to support an integrated approach to post-pandemic recovery, because only by working together can we address the underlying drivers of conflicts and achieve a lasting peace for Africa — a peace we all want.

Annex 15**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez**

[Original: Spanish]

Mexico commends China for convening this debate to reflect on actions the Security Council can take to address the underlying causes of conflict in Africa, as well as to consider the impact of the current pandemic and ways to achieve sustainable recovery. I also thank the Secretary-General and the briefers for their valuable comments.

The Security Council's united action in favour of Africa is critical. That is why Mexico welcomes the adoption of a presidential statement on the importance of addressing the underlying causes of conflict and considers those elements necessary for sustainable post-pandemic recovery.

The challenges facing the African continent to achieve sustainable peace are unique and numerous. However, it is clear that we must focus on certain issues, including institution-building and the rule of law, the primacy of prevention, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

We must also promote the active participation of society as a whole, particularly girls, women and youth, in all stages of post-conflict recovery in order to ensure a more inclusive and effective process.

Mexico acknowledges the early and coordinated response of the African Union and its member States since the beginning of the pandemic to combat the virus and mitigate its socioeconomic effects. In particular, it highlights the work of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, the adoption of the Africa Joint Continental Strategy for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the creation of a response force.

Unfortunately, according to World Bank data, the pandemic will push some 40 million people in the region into extreme poverty. Disruptions in global supply chains and declining incomes are impacting food security and the ability of Governments to deliver some essential services.

The pandemic is also contributing to the deteriorating humanitarian situation, and we reiterate the importance of the Security Council supporting the humanitarian plan for Africa and ensuring that all countries of the region have access to treatment and vaccines for COVID-19. If the vaccination process continues to be slow, it is likely to exacerbate political tensions and conflicts. The humanitarian pause called for by the Secretary-General remains as relevant as ever.

The World Health Organization has warned that African countries have received only 2 per cent of all vaccines administered globally — a clear reflection of the need to accelerate fair access and more equitable allocation of COVID-19 vaccines, in line with resolution 2565 (2021) and General Assembly resolution 74/274.

Mexico is encouraged by the Security Council's recognition of the inequity represented by the poor distribution of vaccines in Africa in order to find a more immediate solution that will also benefit other regions of the world.

Likewise, my country calls on the Security Council, the United Nations system and its Member States and civil society to continue working to generate and promote better-coordinated and multidimensional responses in order to more effectively contain the devastating effects of the pandemic and help the continent recover.

Annex 16**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry**

[Original: French]

On behalf of the Minister of State and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Niger, allow me to express my sincere thanks to you and your Government for organizing this important meeting on peace and security in Africa and on how to address the root causes of conflicts while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development and encourage you to implement it with a view to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Allow me also to thank today's speakers for their excellent presentations.

It is common to hear that African issues represent more than 50 per cent of the subjects on the Security Council's agenda and 70 per cent of United Nations missions under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. This state of affairs is also a function of aggravating factors such as underdevelopment and its structural corollaries, such as poor governance, weak economies, the debt burden and the smuggling and proliferation of weapons in Africa, which all mutually reinforce one another and conspire to seriously undermine the stability of African States. In addition, as several eminent experts on the continent have mentioned, our borders and institutions, a legacy of the colonial system,

“will continue to be a source of instability for Africa until these institutions are restructured to reflect local realities, as well as to face the new challenges of climate change, humanitarian disasters and pandemics”.

From this observation, and as we have repeatedly remarked upon in our statements, the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) offers us, beyond its serious consequences, a unique opportunity to breathe new life into multilateralism and give Africa, once and for all, the political, security and economic instruments it needs to face the contemporary challenges before it.

In view of the foregoing, allow me to make a few recommendations that could contribute to easing Africa's post-pandemic recovery. First, the removal of patent and other intellectual property protections for COVID-19 vaccines, the relaxation of global trade rules, and, most importantly, the increased availability of raw materials, technology and know-how to increase local vaccine-production capacity. We urge the Security Council to support such an initiative, which is advocated by the African Union, to ensure that people living in conflict or fragile situations receive safe and effective vaccines against COVID-19 and thereby close the vaccination gap.

In the Niger, as elsewhere, it is recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on family structures, which we need to take into account. In many countries, the combination of crisis and the pandemic has resulted in loss of life. Cultural and legal practices quite often stigmatize widows, and we are particularly concerned about the exclusion of this group, which can have an impact on achieving sustainable peace. Therefore, ensuring that development and poverty-reduction efforts include widows will be essential to preventing the expansion of the inequality that makes widows' children and orphans more susceptible to recruitment by extremists or, at best, generates school-dropout rates that show an increase in

the number of excluded and therefore disaffected people persons who can fuel social unrest.

My delegation believes that any post-pandemic recovery policy and other actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals must encompass vulnerable groups, including widows and orphans, in order to address the root causes of inequality and build sustainable peace. Indeed, the peacebuilding initiatives, good governance and inclusive approaches contained in the agenda for the protection of civilians must include marginalized groups if they are to succeed. It is not by chance that the COVID-19 pandemic has been described as a “widow-maker”. Widows and orphans are often excluded from public life and lack access to legal remedies owing to disinheritance, as well as to basic social services.

At a time when a small number of countries have vaccine doses far in excess of their needs and some have already reached a vaccination threshold that enables them to open up their economies, it is regrettable that barely 1 per cent of people in developing countries, including those in Africa, are vaccinated. International solidarity and the values of multilateralism, so much trumpeted in our public statements, must be matched by our actions when it comes to the fight against pandemics like COVID-19.

Beyond the vaccine, we need to work on reviving African economies. Although Africa has been spared in terms of infection and mortality rates, its economy has suffered as a result of the restrictions required to combat the pandemic, thereby reversing hard-won development gains across the continent. It is therefore imperative that African countries receive substantial financial support, including from multilateral and regional financial institutions and development agencies. This support should take the form of substantial debt relief, special drawing rights and other financial instruments to ensure that the right conditions are in place for the revival of African economies.

Moreover, addressing the root causes of conflict in Africa in a post-COVID-19 dynamic will necessarily involve addressing the security risks of climate change. Just as we did with COVID-19, addressing the impact of climate change, which is undoubtedly another silent pandemic, must be our main focus in our efforts to promote international peace and security.

I cannot end my remarks without returning to the need to remedy the unbalanced nature of the current global multilateral architecture, which makes Africa a spectator of its own destiny and a victim of the hegemonic aims of certain Powers. These proxy wars, made more deadly by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which unfortunately also fuel terrorism, as is the case in the Sahel, are all factors that hinder the building of the “Africa we want”. Africa’s recovery necessarily requires respect by all for the principle of “African solutions to African problems” in order to lay the foundations for peace. It also requires a strong commitment from the international community to making available the financial resources needed to bring back the African economies affected by the serious effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Annex 17**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King**

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks the briefers for their incisive remarks, and we commend China for convening today's timely and important discussion. As a member of the A3+1 group, which brings together the three African members of the Security Council — Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — and my country, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and as a representative of the sixth region of Africa, our delegation attaches great significance to the theme of today's debate.

More than ever, the complex and consequential challenges of the twenty-first century demand an effective and coordinated multilateralism that bolsters national ownership, enhances lives and livelihoods, and delivers peace, security and development for all. This priority is felt acutely across the African continent, where comprehensive developmental and reparative solutions are urgently required to address the root causes of fragility and insecurity, including those grounded in the historical injustices committed against our global African civilization.

Against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), security risks have become accentuated, social contracts have faltered, public trust has diminished, and ethnic, intercommunal and political divisions have deepened. African countries shoulder a disproportionate share of these societal burdens. Across the Sahel, 29 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, almost 22 million people are acutely food insecure. Millions more remain displaced across the continent — with the Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo accounting for a significant share of forcibly displaced persons. Further, as the human costs of conflict, climate change, COVID-19 and such other contemporary challenges as terrorism continue to escalate, the international community's support for, and solidarity with, Governments and affected populations is a crucial prerequisite for a better future.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms its strong belief that lasting solutions can never be imposed. The surest pathway to peace and security in Africa is through home-grown solutions as articulated by the African Union, including in the Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the Silencing the Guns initiatives. These initiatives should be granted the full support and attention of the international community.

The boundless expertise of local and regional actors, grounded within the unique context of Africa, must be leveraged more often through enhanced partnerships between the United Nations, the African Union and the subregional organizations that span the continent. These regional arrangements should be bolstered, and the bedrock principles of international law must always serve as a guidepost for all peace and security, development and humanitarian activities.

Developed countries should unequivocally honour their overseas development assistance commitments and provide greater debt relief and longer-term capacity-building assistance in line with national priorities. Prejudicial constraints imposed on African countries, including unilateral coercive measures, ought to be withdrawn, and inclusive, people-centred climate-informed solutions should be delivered in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals.

As a matter of priority, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reiterates our calls for COVID-19 vaccines and other critical medical supplies to be made available, affordable and accessible to all. Production capacities should be expanded in developing countries, including across the African continent, to alleviate the strain on

global supply chains and assist with building immunity everywhere. We welcome the decision of some countries to waive intellectual property protections for COVID-19 vaccines and other related products, and we hope that the ongoing discussions at the World Trade Organization will lead to a timely and equitable outcome.

In closing, I reaffirm my delegation's appeal for a comprehensive whole-of-system approach to conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. It is essential that all United Nations agencies and bodies, international financial institutions and other actors across the multilateral system work closely with the African Union and its member States to create conditions conducive to economic recovery, growth and stability. Indeed, as peace and security issues on the continent occupy more than half of the Security Council's agenda, greater efforts are needed to ensure that our African brothers and sisters are not left behind. A stark and increasingly volatile post-pandemic global condition — marked by deep social and economic cleavages — must not become tomorrow's reality.

Annex 18**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Anna Evstigneeva**

[Original: Russian]

We appreciate the Chinese initiative to address such a crucial issue as the root causes of conflict and post-conflict recovery in Africa. Today's debate would have been much more practical had it been an in-person meeting. We thank Secretary-General António Guterres, Chairperson of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat and Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme Achim Steiner for their respective briefings (annexes 1, 2 and 3, respectively).

The relevance of this debate is confirmed by the fact that the majority — up to 70 per cent — of the Security Council's discussions are dedicated to crises in African States, which are quite often aggravated by such threats as terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, illegal arms trafficking and the illicit exploitation of natural resources. The Security Council holds a clearly defined mandate pursuant to the United Nations Charter. Under this mandate, the Security Council must maintain international peace and security in situations when other tools appear ineffective. The Council quite often receives proposals to address the interconnectedness of maintaining security, promoting development, protecting human rights, and addressing political, economic, climate and other issues. We assume that speculative thinking on the theoretical interconnectedness of processes should be left to the academic community, whereas the activity of United Nations bodies should focus on finding practical solutions to problems within their respective mandates.

At the same time, when promoting stabilization and seeking ways to overcome crises in their acute phase, we should bear in mind the root causes of conflicts. Although they are truly multifaceted, such causes include ethnic and religious conflict, wilfully drawn borders, development gaps that cannot be bridged without access to technology, inflexible State institutions. In Africa, causes such as these are largely stem from the colonial era and have not yet been overcome.

Furthermore, colonialism is assuming new forms nowadays. Apart from the existence of unscrupulous trade policies and limited access to markets and technologies, this new colonialism can be characterized by the active interference in the internal affairs of States. If pressure upon sovereign Governments yields no result, then unilateral coercive measures can be hung over the heads of nations like the sword of Damocles. We are convinced that these factors are the reason many African States have fallen behind and up until now have not been able to ensure prompt economic recovery from setbacks or become truly self-sufficient. It is encouraging, however, that, despite all this, Africa is working its own way out, guided by the principle of African solutions to African problems.

We commend the efforts of the African Union and its Peace and Security Council, the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the subregional organizations. The States of the continent have set ambitious goals to end all armed conflicts and implement the socioeconomic programme, Agenda 2063. In recent years, given relevant support by the United Nations and the global community, Africans have made great strides to discover and overcome instability factors. The useful toolkit to that end includes early prevention and response, preventive diplomacy and mediation, good offices, and confidence-building measures. Of course, international support for States' potential to mitigate conflict through socioeconomic recovery remains in high demand. We assume that such support must proceed from national priorities.

This kind of work should build sustainable, self-reliant models rather than merely fill in gaps. It must attract new technology and expertise, boost industries and agriculture, renew key infrastructure, create jobs, sustain health care and promote social security. In short, it must bring about well-balanced progress on the three tracks of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. We cannot agree with the tendency to set climate change issues apart from this triad, as doing so diverts us from the root causes of conflict and shifts assistance priorities.

Recently, problems on the African continent and across the globe have been exacerbated to a great extent by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has struck developing and conflict-affected countries the most. For this reason, the call for a ceasefire and the introduction of a humanitarian pause, as set forth in resolution 2532 (2020), is especially relevant for the continent. When engulfed in conflict, countries cannot provide the needed medical aid to their populations or recover economically against the backdrop of restrictive measures. They need targeted and effective support from the international community. We therefore believe it important to show true solidarity in combating the COVID-19 virus and its adverse consequences everywhere, including Africa.

Accordingly, we must reject approaches based on the narrow interests of small groups, or so-called vaccine nationalism. We must stop politicizing our fight against the common challenges posed by the pandemic. Instead, we must come together to use every opportunity and exert every means available to ensure real access by countries of the continent to medicines to fight COVID-19, and to promote development.

Russia is actively helping African States overcome the after-effects of the pandemic via both bilateral and multilateral channels. Some two dozen African countries have authorized the use of the Russian vaccine, Sputnik-V. We continue to deliver personal protective equipment and other basic items to States in need.

A considerable quantum of Russia's humanitarian assistance and development assistance is administered through the United Nations system. As a permanent member of the Security Council, Russia will continue to make a significant contribution to the efforts of the international community to develop a strategic approach to strengthening peace and stability in Africa as well as conflict prevention and resolution. We focus the work of the Security Council on developing clear and realistic mandates for its missions and ensuring the close monitoring of their implementation. We will continue to train African military and police personnel, including peacekeepers, at Russian specialized institutions.

We are open to constructive cooperation on an equal footing with African countries, as well as leading regional and subregional organizations. We trust that the regular Russia-Africa summit will add to consolidating our long-standing friendly and time-tested relations.

Annex 19**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Philippe Kridelka**

Belgium thanks His Excellency Mr. Wang Yi for the opportunity to discuss this topic.

Over recent months we have witnessed unprecedented needs and challenges. In addition to the dramatic socioeconomic consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis, we are seeing disinformation, discrimination and violence against civilians and health-care workers. Armed groups are profiting from vacuums left by the health crisis to extend their hold over populations. The pandemic has highlighted challenges around the world and exacerbated inequalities, fragility and the human cost of conflict. Those challenges are particularly acute on the African continent.

The pandemic also made us realize that no one will be safe unless we are all safe and that no country can regain economic strength without a global recovery. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has taught us the value of solidarity and of working together in the spirit of a global partnership that sits at the core of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In that spirit, Belgium contributes to the post-COVID-19 recovery. In 2020, €27.5 million were allocated to emergency food aid through the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to integrating human rights in the COVID-19 response through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to education in emergencies through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and to strengthening data collection and digitalization through the Belgian development agency Enabel. A further €4.4 million were allocated in support of a flagship programme with the International Labour Organization on social protection. Building back better also means investing in resilient health systems, universal health coverage and strong social protection schemes. Belgium provides systemic support to health systems, its bilateral partners, international non-governmental organizations and multilateral and United Nations entities.

However, the fight against the pandemic is not over. Belgium is in favour of equitable access to vaccines for all and supports the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility. So far, the European Union (EU) and its member States have donated €2.2 billion, making it the EU COVAX's second largest donor. Belgium has also made a direct contribution of its own of €4 million in 2021, thereby contributing to access to vaccines in the 92 low- and middle-income countries participating in the COVAX Facility. Belgium is committed to a coordinated multilateral approach based on the World Health Organization guidelines and priorities and by supporting existing global mechanisms.

We recognize that fragile countries and countries impacted by conflict are bearing a heavier burden while fighting the pandemic. Now more than ever, the answer lies in solidarity and multilateralism. The Security Council demonstrated leadership by echoing the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. In respect of today's discussion, it must continue to play its important role, in cooperation with the African Union and its subregional organizations, in advancing peace and security in Africa to create the conditions for the post-pandemic recovery and sustainable development. Belgium, nationally and as a part of the European Union, stands ready to help countries in fragile and conflict-affected situations to strengthen their resilience. A deep commitment to promoting human rights and the triple nexus of humanitarian support, development and peace are unequivocal parts of that engagement, as are sustained efforts to fully realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.

Annex 20**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations**

Brazil is thankful to the Chinese presidency of the Security Council for convening this open debate and for drawing attention to the urgent need to address the root causes of conflict and promote post-pandemic recovery in Africa. We are also thankful to the Secretary-General and all the briefers for their invaluable reflections.

In their efforts to achieve lasting peace and sustainable development, conflict-affected countries in Africa have long been facing complex and multifaceted challenges that go beyond the military and traditional security realms. The root causes of each conflict are to be found in its political, economic and social dimensions. Therefore, root causes are inevitably context-specific. Brazil calls upon the international community to scale up its support of nationally defined development and peacebuilding priorities and adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

To those already bearing the brunt of conflict, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has brought additional challenges, including by exacerbating socioeconomic vulnerabilities. While we strive to promote a sustainable recovery to the pandemic, we must lose no time and speed up cooperation projects that generate concrete results to the benefit of populations on the ground. In that context, promoting access to safe, quality, effective and affordable medicines, vaccines and medical products and supporting a multisectoral approach to socioeconomic impacts are essential elements in the fight against COVID-19.

Bearing the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has a crucial role to play within the sustaining peace framework. Under the terms of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council must not shy away from contributing to strengthening international cooperation in support of conflict-affected populations. Peacekeeping missions, in particular, are well positioned to contribute to mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on conflict-affected communities. Member States must remain committed to initiating, funding and constantly improving peacebuilding activities within peacekeeping mandates, particularly through programmatic activities and quick-impact projects.

To conclude, we must also acknowledge that sustaining peace and promoting sustainable development in Africa require extensive coordination among the various United Nations bodies and missions, as well as close collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union. The Peacebuilding Commission can play an instrumental role in convening broad solidarity networks and in helping sustain long-term engagement. The Commission also remains the best platform to bridge cross-cutting discussions, including taking into account the need to preserve a rational division of labour and the intrinsic identities of the various United Nations pillars. In the face of multifaceted challenges, a stronger collaboration among the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission has become more important than ever. A strengthened partnership with the African Union contributes to preventing the duplication of efforts and to optimizing resources, while highlighting the importance of national ownership and regional leadership.

Annex 21**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations**

I have the honour of submitting this statement on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

This is a crucial time for countries affected by conflict and fragility, including many in Africa. To address conflict drivers effectively, we call on the Security Council to put inclusivity, conflict sensitivity and a human-rights-based approach at the centre of all coronavirus disease (COVID-19) recovery efforts.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the COVID-19 crisis has disrupted the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals, exacerbated inequalities and reversed development gains, in particular for women, girls, refugees and internally displaced persons, who already experience poverty, exclusion and marginalization more acutely. The pandemic has made women and girls more vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices. For girls in particular, COVID-19 threatens their education, safety and future. The widespread socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic risk reversing decades of progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

We welcome the early work by the African Union on the COVID-19 response and ongoing work to ensure that recovery efforts contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. We continue to work with the African Union to prioritize those issues, with a focus on the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding, early warning and mediation efforts.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand were pleased to support the joint statement of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect on women and peace and security at the Security Council open debate to mark the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2020 (S/2020/1084, annex 27). Genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing all have a gendered impact.

We welcome the joint inquiry into the Tigray conflict by the Office for the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. We express our grave concern over reported egregious human rights atrocities and humanitarian law violations in Tigray. Canada, Australia and New Zealand strongly support the international community's attention to the issue of systemic sexual and gender-based violence and press for action to bring perpetrators to justice where abuses occur. We join calls for safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access in the region, a top priority given the urgent need for supplies to reach those in need.

Recognizing the long-term socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 across Africa, including on human development and health indicators, economic growth and trade, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are adapting programming to maximize their contribution to COVID-19 efforts. We also welcome the commencement of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the significant potential increased trade has for Africa's long-term recovery and resilience.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand are strong supporters of the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Advance Market Commitment Engagement Group, which will enable 92 low- and middle-income countries, many in Africa, to access vaccines with the support of official development assistance financing and is the centrepiece of global efforts to guard against vaccine nationalism.

The United Nations has a responsibility to ensure that conflict-affected countries — and those members of their societies made most vulnerable — do not fall further behind. This crisis cuts across the United Nations traditional siloes and requires a truly integrated, multisectoral global response and regional partnerships with the African Union (AU) and regional economic communities. The work between the United Nations Development Programme, the AU Commission and the African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention on pandemic response and recovery is an example of that.

To achieve that, we need to ensure strengthened partnerships and financing. We must redouble our efforts to ensure that the work of the United Nations to build and sustain peace has adequate, predictable and sustained funding. In particular, initiatives that support the rights, well-being, health and specific needs of women, girls, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex persons, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and all communities made vulnerable must continue to receive adequate attention and funding.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand support the launch by Canada, Jamaica and the Secretary-General of the Initiative on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond in May 2020 to foster global engagement and develop creative solutions to address the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19. Collective action in all relevant multilateral forums will be required to ensure continued and adequate funding for key development priorities in order to address the root causes of conflict and instability.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand are deeply committed to the sustaining peace agenda, investing in conflict prevention and peacebuilding and contributing to a United Nations system-wide vision for reform. The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has an important role to play. It is the only United Nations body mandated to play a bridging role across the principal organs of the United Nations to ensure integrated, coherent and coordinated support to help countries address risks of conflict and deliver on national priorities to build and sustain peace. We call on the Security Council to increase its engagement with the PBC on addressing the root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand are committed supporters of the Peacebuilding Fund which, in close coordination with the PBC, peacekeeping missions and United Nations country teams, has been working in many African countries to prevent conflict and promote peace, with a particular focus on the inclusion of women and young people in the peacebuilding process. We support the Secretary-General's call for a quantum leap in the financing for peacebuilding to facilitate a shift to conflict prevention instead of crisis response.

The pandemic and associated crises have shown that many peacebuilding successes are fragile. We must rethink our approaches, putting economic security and inclusive economic development and human rights at the heart of peacebuilding, in a conflict-sensitive manner. Although the road ahead is challenging, at the PBC we have heard many examples of the resilience of local communities, the fundamental role that civil society plays in fostering social cohesion at the local and grassroots level and the innovation of the private sector. We must continue to support, learn from and replicate those success stories.

Annex 22**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark. The Nordic countries welcome today's debate on how to address the root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic underscores that global challenges can be tackled only through global action, while emphasizing the urgency of international solidarity and underscoring the value of multilateralism. The pandemic has critically challenged hard-earned development and peacebuilding progress and exacerbated conflict dynamics, divisions and inequalities across the globe. The effects have been felt everywhere, not least in Africa, which is the focus of today's open debate.

As the African continent battles the combined consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, key existing and underlying challenges persist. The poor, women, girls, civilians in conflict areas and people in vulnerable situations, who do not have the financial surplus or the health-care access to cope with the pandemic, are disproportionately affected by the pandemic and its socioeconomic consequences. Furthermore, we see that the pandemic can act as a threat multiplier by strengthening existing tensions borne of increasing inequality and food insecurity. That may serve to fuel conflict, irregular migration and violent extremism.

To ensure a successful recovery in African countries, the political will of national authorities, working closely with civil society and supported by the international community, is key to addressing the root causes of conflict. We must take a coherent and integrated approach across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus, while, at the same time, upholding and promoting respect for human rights.

As we strive to build back better and greener, an integrated approach that draws on all three pillars of the United Nations must be at the heart of our efforts to address the root causes of conflict and support African countries towards attaining the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Citizens' trust in State institutions and restoring the social contract are key to sustainable peace and development. That includes promoting democracy, good governance and the rule of law, while addressing the challenges of socioeconomic inequalities, violations of international humanitarian law, violations and abuses of international human rights law, the marginalization of women, girls and young people and sexual and gender-based violence, as well as security risks related to climate change and environmental degradation.

The multiple and interlinked challenges underline the imperative of working together in a holistic manner. We must ensure closer cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the Human Rights Council and the Economic and Social Council respectively. In this connection, the Nordic countries wish to reiterate their support for the Secretary-General's sustaining peace agenda, as well as the Action for Peacekeeping agenda.

Beyond this, we must draw on all parts of the United Nations system and forge stronger and more inclusive partnerships with the African Union, subregional organizations, civil society and the private sector. In Africa, building a deeper and

more structured partnership between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council will be of paramount importance in this regard.

As long-standing champions of multilateral cooperation, we emphasize the role of the United Nations and a strong World Health Organization to combat the current pandemic and strengthen international preparedness for future health crises. This must be done in close coordination with relevant regional bodies, such as the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Nordic countries are committed to fair global access to COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. We can overcome this pandemic only through rapid, safe and fair access to vaccines for all — promoting the principle of leaving no one behind.

As members and active supporters of the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, the Nordic countries emphasize their role in reaching this goal. We commend COVAX for having shipped over 53 million vaccine doses to 121 countries, including to countries across Africa. We will continue to support COVAX's global efforts to achieve the target of vaccinating 2 billion people in 2021.

The Nordic countries remain committed to supporting the United Nations in preventive diplomacy by effectively addressing the roots causes of conflict in Africa. We must leverage the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to turn the tide on conflict and insecurity and build a more sustainable, equal and resilient future.

Annex 23**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations, Taye Atskeselassie Amde**

At the outset, we thank China for organizing this important open debate and welcome State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Wang Yi. His attendance today underscores the importance that China attaches to peace and security in Africa.

We also recognize Secretary-General António Guterres and United Nations Development Programme Administrator Achim Steiner for their comprehensive briefing and reflections on this important topic.

The human toll of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is now visibly apparent. Its political, social and economic impact will further unfold in the coming years. Tragically, despite the commendable progress in developing and widely distributing the vaccines in the developed world, Africa is still in the thick of this global crisis.

The virus has laid bare our collective vulnerabilities, but also our interdependence. As the developed countries begin to turn the corner, Africa and other least developing countries are at risk of being left behind. To build back better from this ravaging disease, we must ensure universal access to vaccines. We must accept and operate on the basis of the principle that no one is safe until everyone is vaccinated. Otherwise, it will only be a matter of time until the virus mutates and another deadlier strain refuses to respond to the current vaccine, forcing yet another global lockdown.

Ethiopia strongly believes that socioeconomic fallouts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to exacerbate the socioeconomic underpinning of conflicts in Africa. More importantly, hard-won gains towards the Sustainable Development Goals are also at risk.

Preventing outbreaks of conflict and their recurrence is one of the central pillars of the African Union Peace and Security Architecture. In the current context, prevention and addressing root causes of conflict entail investment in job creation, adaptation and resilience towards the impacts of climate change, addressing youth unemployment and expanding development and social protection programmes to respond to growing needs.

Furthermore, preventive diplomacy is an area that can benefit from a robust United Nations-African Union partnership. In this regard, we attach great importance to the fundamentals in the cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (AU) that centre on properly implementing the African Continental Early Warning System, the AU Mediation Support Unit and the AU Panel of the Wise. In this regard, we commend and stand ready to support the advancement of the partnership of the United Nations Secretariat with regional and subregional organizations.

In this regard, the Security Council must support and promote national and regional conflict prevention efforts. In doing so, the agency and ownership of States in their own affairs and the rightful and mostly effective role of regional and subregional organizations shall be upheld at all times.

We believe that the eradication of poverty and a governance system rooted in basic freedoms and principles and equal participation are the foundation for successful prevention for intra-State conflicts. Peace endures when development is inclusive, when citizens' security is guaranteed, when women and young people are involved in the affairs of their countries. This desired state may be attained only

through a nationally owned process that is fully cognizant of the context of the State concerned.

In our continent, whose demography is dominated by youth, our prospects for economic development or State-building hinge on our capacity to reap the benefits of this demographic dividend. It is equally imperative to strengthen institutional capacity and root out corruption and maladministration to deny merchants of conflicts the opportunity to prey on our vulnerabilities and the unaddressed needs of our youth.

Ethiopia has prioritized building peace at the national level, enforcing the rule of law and addressing macroeconomic bottlenecks to respond to growing socioeconomic demands. Our efforts have been tested by interlinked internal and external challenges. In our case, the territorial integrity of the State and the prevailing constitutional order were put in unprecedented peril. As any State in such a situation would do, the Government of Ethiopia undertook a successful law enforcement operation that neutralized the perpetrators and their evil plans to uproot the Ethiopian State as we know it.

Unfortunately, the law enforcement operation to restore law and order resulted in humanitarian problems. We are working hard to address immediate needs, return those displaced by the conflict to their homes, rebuild damaged infrastructure and restore normalcy. We encourage partners and the international community to scale up their humanitarian support and work with the federal Government to undertake rebuilding and reconstruction efforts.

It should be noted that efforts to undermine the legitimacy of Governments and the policy measures we take to preserve law and order stand in contrast to the principles of international law, including sovereignty and the obligation not to interfere in the internal affairs of States. We recognize that this is not an original problem that an African nation faces. However, we underscore that this approach is certainly not productive and shadows what is presented to us as care and concern for humanitarian needs. In this regard, we call for a true cooperation respecting the norms we all have signed up for.

Finally, the international community, particularly the Security Council, should actively support national, regional and subregional efforts to ensure African solutions to African challenges. That is especially so, when the regional and subregional organizations are seized of their own affairs and demonstrating strides to resolve the continent's issues.

Annex 24**Statement by Olof Skoog Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, in its capacity as observer**

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is a multifaceted crisis that requires an integrated, whole-of-Government response. As Secretary-General Guterres has noted, the public health crisis has fast become in many instances an economic and social crisis and a protection and human rights crisis rolled into one.

The pandemic has halted economic growth and reversed hard-fought gains in terms of poverty reduction, plunging millions of people back below the poverty line. The ongoing crisis is exacerbating inequalities and especially affecting those who already live in vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized situations in Africa and around the world. It is increasing grievances and reshaping conflict dynamics, fuelling root causes of conflicts and ultimately destabilizing already fragile societies.

Solidarity and close cooperation in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic are crucial. At the heart of our response is the conviction that a global crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, requires a multilateral response. To win the battle against this pandemic, vaccines and health security should be accessible to all across the globe. Nobody is safe until everybody is safe. Team Europe, the European Union (EU) and its member States have mobilized around €40.5 billion to support the most vulnerable in the fight against the pandemic, address the immediate health emergency and humanitarian needs, strengthen health systems and support economic recovery and social protection. Rapid, safe and fair access to health care and vaccinations for all is just as much an investment in health as it is an investment in peace and security.

This is why the EU helped set up and invested in the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility early on. The EU and its member States, through Team Europe, are one of the leading donors to the COVAX Facility, with over €2.47 billion contributed to date. We believe that this is the best vehicle to deliver on international vaccine solidarity. Altogether, COVAX has so far shipped over 53 million doses to 121 countries, which will help protect health-care workers, as well as the most vulnerable populations. The first deliveries of vaccines went to African countries: Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire; Nigeria, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and several others followed. The EU has also pledged €100 million to support the roll-out of vaccination campaigns in Africa, as spearheaded by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

Beyond the immediate health needs, strengthening international preparedness for and response to future pandemics is a top priority for the EU. The EU and its member States are committed to advancing global health security, including by strengthening the World Health Organization (WHO) and working towards an international treaty on pandemics within its framework. To help build resilience and prevent future outbreaks, the EU will expand cooperation on health by building resilient health systems and reinforcing preparedness and response capacities in Africa. We are exploring ways to support local manufacturing of vaccines, medicines and health products, while taking into account mid- and long-term impacts of the pandemic on peace and stability.

We also need a response that builds resilience as the effects of COVID-19, will be with us for a long time. In line with the call to build back better, the EU is working relentlessly to ensure a green, sustainable, digital and inclusive recovery, through international cooperation and multilateral action, that delivers on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Explicit attention is being paid to peacebuilding and preventive needs. We have to become better at working with early warnings, responding to risks before they turn into conflicts through a

whole-of-system approach. Social cohesion and inclusive multilateralism will help sustain integrated recovery and build more resilient societies.

COVID-19 has also affected human rights and protection on all continents, leaving behind an increasingly negative — and likely long-term — impact on the enjoyment of human rights, including fundamental freedoms, equality and the principle of non-discrimination. Upholding good governance, dignity and human rights, including the rights of women and girls, older persons, children and persons with disabilities should remain at the heart of the global recovery and our collective efforts through targeted gender-, age- and disability-sensitive measures. Our actions should put people at the centre and recognize that everyone has the right to enjoy the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health.

The European Union is Africa's first security and defence partner, supporting the development of African capabilities and solutions to African problems. The EU takes this opportunity to reiterate the importance of ensuring sustainable and predictable financing for African Union (AU) peace support operations and African-led peace and security initiatives in Africa, including through United Nations-assessed contributions. As requested by the Security Council, the AU is now developing an EU-funded compliance framework to ensure that the troops deployed in the framework of AU-led peace support operations will be fully compliant with international humanitarian law and international human rights standards and regulations.

From the Sahel to the Horn, from Bangui to Cabo Delgado, the EU is active in all crises across the African continent. Ten Common Security and Defence Policy missions are deployed across the continent from Libya to Mali, the Niger, Somalia and the Central African Republic to name a few, engaging 2,000 Europeans soldiers, police officers and other civil servants. Those missions provide advice and training to more than 30,000 African military, police and judicial personnel. We work closely alongside the African Union in these key locations supporting efforts to address root causes of conflict and ensure effective delivery on Security Council mandates.

Finally, the EU will continue to further international debt relief efforts for African countries with a view to preventing conflict and helping build sustainable peace. The EU will also continue to support the sustainable use of natural resources, new green technologies and local value chains. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring an increased level playing field for enterprises and to restarting investments, while contributing to the protection of the democratic and civic space and human rights.

In conclusion, the Security Council can play an important role in helping the international community to focus on ensuring that the world's most vulnerable affected by conflict and insecurity also receive fair and equitable access to vaccines. This includes bringing attention to the devastating effects that the pandemic has on people in fragile settings and remaining open to considering the role that peace operations can play in this context.

Annex 25**Statement by the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, Gabriele Caccia**

The Holy See wishes to thank the People's Republic of China for convening today's open debate.

So much of the focus of the Security Council is on Africa, and with cause. Conflicts continue to rage, communities are divided, resources are plundered, all of which favour the few, exacerbate poverty and inequality, degrade the environment, increase food insecurity, rob children of education, forcing many of them into armed groups, and lead to so many deaths.

Last year, while the world focused on how to deal with the public health crisis, the goal of Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 was sadly not achieved and perhaps even overlooked. Such a noble initiative, however, should certainly not be forgotten. As Pope Francis recently noted,

“the pandemic is still spreading, while the social and economic crisis remains severe, especially for the poor. Nonetheless, armed conflicts have not ended, and military arsenals are being strengthened. That is today's scandal.”

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it has shown that we can change our behavioural patterns. To silence the guns in a continent where too many people still live in extreme poverty, we must put an end to the illegal circulation of arms. Embargoes exist, as do mechanisms put in place by the Security Council to strengthen the rule of law and democracy in countries transitioning from protracted conflict into peace and greater stability. These solemn commitments, however, need to be translated into reality on the ground. There are still far too many acts of terrorism in Africa, resulting in loss of life, physical and psychological harm and forced displacements that further pressure territories and populations seeking to survive on limited resources.

Humanitarian appeals are many, and while assistance is necessary to help the poorest and those in vulnerable situations, unless such aid goes hand in hand with ambitious, far-sighted and culturally sensitive integral development projects, those substantial investments will not lead to peace, stability and growth.

Too many African children are still prevented from realizing their potential by a lack of access to quality education, including due to conflict. Schools have been destroyed; others have been taken over by armed groups. While many in the developed world have taken to e-learning during the pandemic, this was not an option for many children in Africa who find themselves on the other side of the digital divide. Poor education or, in some settings, no education at all increases the risk of extreme poverty and manipulation by, or enrolment into, militias. Without firm commitments to ensure peace and provide quality education, we will likely be having discussions like today's for many years to come.

The way beyond the pandemic has already been found, thanks to the development and distribution of vaccines. Yet this way is not available to all, particularly in developing countries. The refrigeration and other conditions required for storage and distribution are not available in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, where electricity still is a luxury for many, particularly in rural communities. Post-pandemic recovery in Africa requires ensuring that essential infrastructure be in place.

We speak regularly about “African solutions for African problems” but, for this laudable goal to become a reality, we need to support our African brothers and

sisters in becoming dignified agents of their own destiny. Commitment is required not only at the local and regional levels, but also on the part of the international community, States, financial institutions and other stakeholders, to ensure that even the remotest communities have what is needed for vaccination and those behind are not pushed even further back. We have frequently heard in debates in the Security Council that, “no one is safe until all are safe”. And, while safety most certainly involves security, it also requires, as we have noted, adequate health care, quality education and professional training opportunities for all boys and girls.

The Catholic Church is doing its part in various contexts to ensure that integral human development and peace come to Africa, through peacebuilding efforts, education, health care and more. Consecrated women and men have taken an unsung but very clear and determined lead in this. Their communities, made up as they are of different cultures, ethnicities and backgrounds, testify that this is possible.

In this regard, Pope Francis, drawing on the wisdom of the bishops of South Africa, wrote recently that true reconciliation is achieved proactively,

“by forming a new society — a society based on service to others, rather than the desire to dominate; a society based on sharing what one has with others, rather than the selfish scramble by each for as much wealth as possible; a society in which the value of being together as human beings is ultimately more important than any lesser group, whether it be family, nation, race or culture”.

When such a model of reconciliation is fostered and grows, then communities can take an honest look at the root causes, seek to eliminate them and move closer to achieving the sustainable future to which the family of nations has committed itself.

Annex 26**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations, Zsuzsanna Horváth**

At the outset, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a national statement on this important and timely issue. Hungary recognizes the importance of the question of post-pandemic recovery, as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has had a devastating effect on our global community and economy. However, the pandemic has created not only new threats to global peace and security, but also unique opportunities to improve the prospects for future cooperation.

In this regard, Hungary acknowledges the important ties between Europe and Africa, based on history, proximity and shared interests. Bearing in mind the dire economic and social situation in several African countries caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and in line with our newly adopted Africa strategy, Hungary intends to provide assistance and implement projects that contribute to the development of the economies of our partners in the region. Our priorities are to enhance and enlarge our political partnerships in Africa, to continue our tied-aid credit programmes and to implement a more structured form of development cooperation with African countries. One of our key programmes is educational cooperation, which will remain an integral part of our efforts, especially within the framework of Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship programme.

The Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Program is Hungary's unique higher education grant programme for foreign students based on bilateral agreements. and Africa is one of the focus areas. In the 2020 to 2021 academic year, more than 2,040 scholarship holders from 15 countries are pursuing studies in Hungary, and a further 19 African countries will be included in the programme during the following years. The strategic principles of the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship programme are in line with the strategies of the Hungarian Government related to migration and the development of Africa, that is, developing education, strengthening local communities and promoting sustainable economic and social development by supporting African countries with well-educated professionals who have the knowledge to tackle the most pressing issues and the root causes of conflict and migration.

Turning to economic development, Hungary has been placing ever-greater emphasis on the importance of international development cooperation as a means of spurring economic development and deepening our relations with important partners. Hungary's international development cooperation policy is based on two key pillars, namely, addressing the root causes of migration locally and establishing long-lasting economic partnerships. Hungary's official development assistance in 2020 amounted to approximately \$411.4 million, which resulted in a significant increase in the ratio of our official development assistance to our gross national income.

International development cooperation with our African partners is of great significance to Hungary. According to preliminary data, in 2020 Hungary dedicated more than €20.1 million to the implementation of 106 international development projects in Africa.

Finally, as a part of our humanitarian efforts, the Hungary Helps Agency has launched several assistance programmes to help people in 16 African countries. The total value of the programmes amounts to €2.9 million in 2021.

Hungary is dedicated to remaining a close partner of African countries in the process of overcoming their outstanding challenges. With respect to the new circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, Hungary stands ready to renew

that commitment within the new possibilities of post-pandemic recovery and to offer sustainable solutions with a focus on local implementation, so that the African countries can become an even more integral part of the international community through the creation of prosperous economic and social opportunities.

Annex 27**Statement by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Indonesia to the United Nations, Mohammad Koba**

I thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting on addressing the root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa. I also thank the briefers for their presentations.

In that regard, allow me to address some key points.

First, regarding cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (AU), Indonesia firmly believes that regional cooperation remains critical in addressing the root causes of conflict. Reflecting on our experience in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, I would say that being a neighbour is not merely about geographic proximity; it is also about camaraderie, about caring and sharing, and about our common humanity.

Hence the Council needs to work together to strengthen the cooperation between the United Nations and the AU. One of the avenues to that end is a meeting between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council. We look forward to more strategic discussions and further harmonious collaboration between the two Councils towards promoting concrete action and ensuring the full implementation of agreements in many cases involving conflict. Both organizations should complement each other's role and mandate, with a view to ensuring an impact on the ground in the areas of preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Secondly, concerning development for sustainable peace, Indonesia, along with our peacebuilding efforts, emphasizes the need to strengthen cooperation in preventing countries from relapsing into conflict through development. Indonesia has always been a close partner of Africa since the Bandung Asian-African Conference, held in 1955, and will continue to support Africa, including through technical cooperation and capacity-building programmes.

In April 2018 we held the Indonesia-Africa Forum, and subsequently, in August 2019, the Indonesia-Africa Infrastructure Dialogue. Those events have resulted in concrete economic cooperation in various strategic sectors, including infrastructure, trade, connectivity and strategic industries.

Thirdly, in terms of enhancing post-pandemic recovery, our collective endeavour towards peace and prosperity in Africa has never been more challenging owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Most important, we need to ensure that the pandemic does not further escalate tensions among countries. With that in mind, Indonesia firmly believes that a global pandemic can be resolved only through global solidarity and cooperation.

Access to vaccines remains an essential element of fighting the pandemic. We are concerned over the uneven global distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. We pledge to treat COVID-19 vaccination as a global public good by ensuring affordable, equitable and fair access to vaccines for all, as highlighted in the Political Declaration on Equitable Global Access to COVID-19 Vaccines.

Indonesia therefore supports the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility and the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment, including the role of the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment Engagement Group, as one of the main multilateral mechanisms to ensure fair access and equitable global distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, especially for low- and middle-income economies, including for many African countries.

I would like to conclude by reiterating Indonesia's commitment to working together as a true partner of Africa in its journey towards peace. We are confident that through constructive cooperation and the active participation of all stakeholders, we will soon recover from this pandemic.

Annex 28**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations**

Italy thanks the Government of the People's Republic of China for having organized this open debate and aligns itself with the statement of the European Union (EU) (annex 24).

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has affected international peace and security and has exacerbated the root causes of conflicts across the globe. That is especially true for African countries, which are the most exposed to the multiple consequences of the current global crisis. The international community must stand in support of Africa and especially of its conflict-affected countries.

That means, first of all, tackling the current pandemic on the basis of solidarity, considering vaccination as a global public good. From the very beginning of this emergency, Italy has strongly supported the creation of an international alliance to advance a global vaccination campaign. The COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, to which the EU and its member States have contributed more than €2.47 billion to date, has so far shipped over 53 million doses to 121 countries, including 26 African countries, which will help protect the most vulnerable populations.

At the same time, we need to make sure that efforts to increase global preparedness and response to pandemic crises include the strengthening of health-care capabilities and structures in African countries, in line with the principle of leaving no one behind. On 21 May, Italy, together with the European Commission, will host the Global Health Summit, which will focus on a set of common principles to strengthen our health-care systems, foster our preparedness and improve our response capabilities. We hope that this will serve as the basis for more coordinated action at the global, regional and national levels.

To help Africa overcome the challenges posed by COVID-19, it is also crucial to place the sustainable development of African countries at the centre of the international efforts for a better recovery. Italy made support for the most vulnerable countries a priority of the Italian presidency of the Group of 20 (G-20), with the motto "People, Planet, Prosperity". Supporting a better recovery of the African continent will be one of the two major priorities in the agenda of the G-20 Foreign Affairs and Development Ministerial Meeting, scheduled to take place on 28 and 29 June in Matera, Italy.

Financing for sustainable development is another priority of Italy's G-20 presidency. At this extraordinary juncture, we have been working to ensure adequate, timely and effective fiscal and financial measures to support the global economy, especially the most vulnerable countries. The extension of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative until the end of 2021 and the request to the International Monetary Fund for a new Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) allocation of \$650 billion and for a reallocation of unused SDRs, on a voluntary basis, to the benefit of the most vulnerable economies are tangible outcomes of that action.

In the framework of its partnership with the United Kingdom for the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Italy is also striving to ensure that the objectives of the climate action are timely and fully met, in the interest of the entire international community and of the many African countries that are particularly affected by the consequences of climate change. In that spirit, on 7 and 8 October Italy will host a ministerial event dedicated to climate challenges and sustainable development in Africa.

Italy will also continue to play its role as a reliable security partner for African countries. From the Sahel to the Horn of Africa, Italy is actively participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations, European Union missions and other international initiatives such as the Takuba Task Force. We will also continue to support African countries through direct assistance and capacity-building programmes aimed at promoting human rights, the rule of law and good governance.

Annex 29**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, Ishikane Kimihiro**

I thank the Chinese presidency for having convened this important meeting and the Secretary-General, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and other briefers for their remarks.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to pose a threat to human security and to generate widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of individuals around the globe. Government resources are overstretched, adversely affecting the most vulnerable people, including women, youth and minorities. It has increased fragility on the African continent, further exacerbating the multifaceted root causes of conflict, such as poverty, inequality, political instability, intercommunal hostility and violent extremism.

In the light of the recurring waves of new infections due to the COVID-19 variants, we must concentrate, first and foremost, on promoting vaccination and strengthening health systems in Africa, which are the foundation for any post-pandemic recovery.

In that context, Japan will co-host the Gavi COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Advance Market Commitment Summit on 2 June in an effort to close the financial gap for vaccines within the framework of the COVAX Summit, and meet the target of delivering up to 1.8 billion doses this year. Japan also recently announced that it would provide \$27 million of emergency grant aid to help equip African countries with cold-chain networks for transporting vaccines in order to ensure equitable access to them for people from all walks of life. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, Japan has provided more than \$350 million of assistance to Africa, including the provision of medical equipment.

Beyond emergency preparedness and response, drastic measures are needed to prevent future pandemics through strengthening health sector governance and service delivery. Over the years, Japan has engaged in building resilient and inclusive health systems in Africa by supporting the capacity-building of medical practitioners and policymakers and improving medical facilities. The promotion of universal health coverage should remain an essential pillar for ensuring human security and leaving no one behind.

Building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions based on the principles of African ownership, is the key to peace and stability in Africa. To support such efforts, Japan has been promoting the New Approach for Peace and Stability in Africa (NAPSA), launched in 2019 at the seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development. It aims to address the root causes of conflict and terrorism through supporting institution-building.

Under the NAPSA initiative, Japan provides support to the Sahel subregion. As a new member of the Coalition for the Sahel, Japan has been lending assistance to peacekeeping training centres, promoting capacity-building in police and justice sectors and providing vocational training to the youth in order to prevent their radicalization. At the second ministerial meeting of the Coalition for the Sahel in March, Japan announced a new humanitarian and development assistance package of about \$80 million.

In conclusion, Japan will continue to be a reliable partner for Africa in support of its efforts to build back better from COVID-19, achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063, and address the root

causes of conflict in the continent. Looking ahead to the eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development to be held next year in Tunisia, Japan renews its commitment to further promote the partnership for African development.

Annex 30**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, Vanessa Frazier**

Malta thanks the Chinese presidency of the Security Council for organizing this open debate on the need to address the root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa. Malta acknowledges that, in conjunction with resolving conflicts by addressing their root causes, it is also crucial to promote a global recovery plan for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Malta fully aligns itself with the statement submitted by the European Union (annex 24) and would like to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

Addressing the root causes of conflict is an important element of conflict prevention and resolution. Successful conflict prevention and mediation lies in enhanced dialogue, long-term confidence-building measures, awareness of potential conflict situations, the ability to analyse relevant information and the political will to do the right thing. To that end, we commend the work carried out by the United Nations missions in Africa, including peacekeeping missions. Those tailor-made structures are critical tools through which we can deliver positive outcomes. Malta calls for continued Security Council engagement in securing the participation of all relevant parties at every level of society and of women, in particular, in the peacemaking process. In addition, Malta supports increased African Union engagement in dealing with peace and security issues in the region.

This challenging situation should serve as a timely wake-up call to enhance and revitalize multilateralism. Strong cooperation predicated on dialogue and trust is necessary to address these global challenges in a clear and coordinated manner on the basis of solidarity for the achievement of common goals. The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic fallout is also a reminder that the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change are essential if we are to enhance our joint capacity to address major systemic shocks in future. In that context, these challenging times urge us to identify opportunities and creative ways of promoting the expeditious realization of the 2030 Agenda while addressing pressing needs.

As vaccine roll-outs are bringing back hope that the end of the pandemic might be in sight, open and equitable access to vaccines is one of the key elements to ensure that African countries recover as soon as possible. Although the number of vaccinations globally have overtaken reported COVID-19 infections, unfortunately, Africa is still lagging behind. Affordable, non-discriminatory access to vaccines is essential to ensure that no one is left behind.

Malta has actively supported the global humanitarian response to the pandemic. We have contributed financially towards the delivery of vital supplies to vulnerable countries, in particular to the northern region of Africa, through a number of multilateral humanitarian agencies. Together with other States, Malta has joined the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility in order to maximize quick, safe and fair access to vaccines.

The virus knows no border or nationality; neither should our solidarity. Concerted efforts of the international community are central in addressing the current challenges. We have repeatedly received calls for countries to work together in order to recover and return to normality as quickly as possible. The world cannot return to normal if the pandemic is not controlled everywhere. What we have learned thus far from COVID-19 is that the world has shown more cooperation than many

might have expected, even if the effort to vaccinate the world is not the only test of our ability to cooperate.

Unfortunately, the unprecedented nature of the pandemic provided fertile ground for the spread of disinformation and misinformation. The United Nations Department of Global Communications has played a crucial role in countering such efforts by providing data-driven information and clear facts. We are convinced that the United Nations will continue to play a key role in countering disinformation and misinformation related to the vaccine and its effects.

Malta's long-standing commitment to advancing dialogue within international forums in order to ensure accessible and high-quality education and employment opportunities for all reaffirms our stance to support the creation of policies for an actively engaged society that leaves nobody behind.

Malta also believes that economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights are fundamental to the success of the public health response and recovery from the pandemic, which is why it is imperative that these rights are fully respected, even in these difficult times.

Going forward, we need a frank discussion on how to ensure resilience. The objective should be to strengthen and stabilize existing structures and ties while seeking cooperative approaches to address future crises of similar scales.

Annex 31**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Munir Akram**

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Chinese presidency for convening today's timely and important open Security Council debate on the important linkages between the root causes of conflict in Africa and the post-pandemic recovery on the continent.

The root causes of conflict in Africa are complex and multidimensional and include poverty and underdevelopment, internal struggles for scarce resources, external contests for natural resources, and foreign interventions designed to suppress the rights of peoples to determine their own political and economic destinies. Above all, Africa's long and painful history of colonization has left behind numerous conflicts and disputes across the continent that continue to affect its peace, stability and progress. The colonial legacy is also reflected in some of the social inequalities and continued economic, trade — and often political and military — dependence on former colonial Powers. These challenges have been exacerbated by an unequal global order that often prioritizes profits over the common good.

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a global health and socioeconomic crisis. It has triggered the worst recession since the Great Depression and disproportionately affected the poorest countries. The pandemic has revealed and exacerbated global inequalities.

The pandemic has had a devastating impact on Africa, especially those countries that suffer from existing structural vulnerabilities. According to the World Bank, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic activity in Africa is likely to decline by 3.3 per cent, resulting in the loss of \$115 billion. The economic decline in some vulnerable countries will be much larger. The pandemic is also likely to push an estimated 40 million people on the continent into extreme poverty, which translates into losing nearly five years of hard-won progress against poverty.

Given that nearly 50 per cent of the issues pertaining to international peace and security on the Security Council's agenda pertain to Africa, our failure to help Africa control and subsequently recover from the debilitating health and socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic will lead to further exacerbation of conflicts in the continent. Helping Africa recover from the debilitating impact of the pandemic will not only require international support for a robust vaccination programme that reaches across the continent, including to conflict zones, but also the provision of adequate fiscal space and additional liquidity to recover from the economic reversal. It will also entail renewed efforts to sustain peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts in the conflict-afflicted countries and regions.

Unfortunately, low-income countries, especially in Africa, are lagging well behind in terms of vaccine access, despite the Secretary-General identifying vaccine equity as "the biggest moral test before the global community". Of the total 832 million doses administered globally, 82 per cent have gone to the high- or upper-middle-income countries, while low-income countries have just received just 0.2 per cent.

The World Bank estimates that every month of delay in vaccination costs the African continent \$13.8 billion in lost gross domestic product. Africa still needs around \$12 billion to vaccinate a sufficient number of people to ensure adequate protection from further surges of the COVID-19 virus. Instituting a viable framework for the equitable and affordable distribution of COVID vaccine to Africa should be a central component of the global strategy to contain the pandemic around the world,

enabling the continent to recover from the impacts of the pandemic, revive economic growth and realize the Sustainable Development Goals.

As the President of the Economic and Social Council, Pakistan convened a Special Ministerial Meeting in April 2021 entitled “A Vaccine for All”, which helped draw attention to the issue of vaccination. The meeting underscored the need for drastically accelerating efforts to ensure equitable access to the vaccine through, inter alia, scaling up vaccine production, supply and distribution; fully finding the COVAX facility; promoting the release of excess stocks of vaccines held by some countries; ending export restrictions that restrict or slow the availability of vaccine; diversifying supply chains; expanding manufacturing capacity globally, especially in low- and middle-income countries; and easing restrictions related to intellectual property rights to allow local vaccine production, especially in Africa.

International support will also be needed to revamp fragile health systems on the continent. Helping the African continent deal with the financial fallout of the pandemic is also a vital component of a post-pandemic recovery strategy. The Prime Minister of Pakistan has proposed a five-point agenda of priority financial measures to help developing countries overcome the impact of the pandemic. These five points are expansion in debt relief and restructuring; creation of new special drawing rights (SDRs) and redistribution of unutilized SDRs to developing countries; provision of larger concessional lending, including achievement of the 0.7 per cent official-development-assistance target; mobilization of the promised \$100 billion in climate finance; halting illicit financial flows from developing countries; and obtaining unconditional return of the assets stolen by corrupt politicians and criminals. Implementation of this action plan in the context of Africa and other parts of the world will help foster recovery from the recession and promote peace and development, including in Africa.

Furthermore, the pandemic has accentuated the importance of preventive diplomacy, mediation and other means of peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts in Africa. In this regard, the ongoing partnership between the African Union and the United Nations on issues pertaining to peace and security in Africa needs to be reinforced, with a special emphasis on institutional mechanisms aimed at conflict prevention, early warning and mediation.

Efforts must also be undertaken towards the implementation of the Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire, in cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. Likewise, our peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies must also evolve to take into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the peace and security milieu in Africa. United Nations peacekeepers at the front lines also need adequate protection from the health impacts of the pandemic.

Over the last seven decades, as a participant in United Nations peacekeeping operations, Pakistan has been at the forefront of efforts aimed at maintaining peace and security in Africa. In the same vein, we will continue to support all international efforts aimed at helping Africa recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Annex 32**Statement by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Mohamed Fathi Ahmed Edrees**

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the People's Republic of China on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and extend my wishes for a successful tenure. I also thank the President, for today's timely reflection on addressing root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa.

Today's important debate coincides with ongoing deliberations within the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on ways of strengthening relations between the Commission and the Security Council in support of peacebuilding in Africa. During an informal exchange between the PBC and the President of the Security Council on 10 May, States members of the Commission noted that the pandemic has exacerbated existing economic, health and societal pressures, particularly in conflict-affected countries, and advocated equitable access to vaccines. They emphasized the importance of coherence between all three pillars of the work of the United Nations, in accordance with bodies' respective mandates, and stressed that the PBC is uniquely placed to foster a more effective response, as is the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). They reiterated the importance of strengthening partnerships with the African Union (AU) and subregional organizations and highlighted the need to empower women and youth to play an equal role in post-pandemic recovery efforts. They further emphasized the need to integrate peacebuilding and sustaining peace into efforts to build back better.

This debate also comes after finalizing the PBC's first-of-its-kind advice to the General Assembly on "causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", in which I reported on the Commission's continued engagement in helping to build and sustain peace, address the root causes of conflict and promote sustainable development in a number of conflict-affected countries in Africa under its consideration, in line with national priorities and the principle of national ownership, while emphasizing that inclusiveness is key to advancing national peacebuilding processes. Moreover, the PBC's advice contained recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly and further encouraged the Assembly to draw upon the convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission to mobilize attention and commitment from all relevant stakeholders and partners for the peacebuilding needs of conflict-affected countries. In this context, I wish to reiterate that peacebuilding and sustaining peace require coherence, sustained engagement and coordination among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, consistent with their mandates set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

From the onset of the pandemic, the Commission has served as a platform to discuss ways to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on development and peacebuilding in countries under its consideration. The Commission has created space for national and regional leaders in peacebuilding contexts under its consideration to share their experiences and seek support for efforts aimed at building back better from the pandemic. Governments and regional organizations and civil society representatives from across Africa have consistently told the Commission that the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating existing economic, health and societal pressures, particularly in conflict-affected countries, underscoring the imperative of addressing the root causes of instability and strengthening collective action for inclusive and sustainable development.

They have called for further support to empower women to undertake leadership roles in peacebuilding and COVID-19 recovery initiatives. During a

recent meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on the Sahel region, Ms. Fatchima Nayaya, from a non-governmental organization based in the Niger known as ONG WARAKA, presented examples of positive change in the Niger brought about by empowering women and youth to lead local community-development initiatives. She joined other women peacebuilders from Africa, who in their recent briefings to the PBC, stressed the importance of adequate funding for women, peace and security and youth, peace and security initiatives.

During an informal consultative meeting held between the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the PBC in October last year, the two bodies recognized the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in the countries and regions under the consideration of the PBC and the crucial role of women and youth to help address them. They called for stronger support for AU-owned and AU-led post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts, and in that regard welcomed the establishment of the AU Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development as a positive step towards further advancing the implementation of peacebuilding strategies in Africa. At the same meeting, member States of the AU recalled the powerful testimonies of the excellent work of women peacebuilders from across Africa since the outset of the pandemic, which clearly showed awareness of the implications of COVID-19 for women and acknowledging their meaningful participation in peace processes. AUPSC and PBC members agreed that they should work closely together to ensure greater support for women-led and youth-led peacebuilding organizations and initiatives.

More recently, I represented the Peacebuilding Commission at the second edition of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development, where the need to prioritize institution-building in conflict-affected countries was emphasized, particularly in view of the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Forum recognized that the pandemic has exacerbated governance gaps across the African continent, affecting the health, economic and social sectors and causing additional strains on social cohesion, with implications for the peace and security landscape, most notably through exploitation by armed groups and terrorist organizations. During the deliberations, there was wide recognition that, in order for peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts to be successful, Governments must invest in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at the national and local levels while promoting inclusive governance through a whole-of-Government approach.

The messages at the Aswan Forum echoed concerns from several members of the PBC that gathering adequate, predictable and sustained resources for peacebuilding remains a critical challenge in ensuring conflict-sensitive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and in building back better. In this respect, pursuant to the mandate set out in the 2020 dual resolutions on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (General Assembly resolution 75/201 and resolution 2558 (2020)) on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, the Commission has been convening relevant stakeholders with a view to generating action-oriented recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly during a high-level meeting on financing for peacebuilding at the seventy-sixth session of the Assembly. In this context, the Commission has recognized the flexibility and adaptability of the PBF to COVID-19-related recovery needs and has welcomed the work of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations and the Peacebuilding Support Office in support of United Nations resident coordinators in multiple countries in Africa to advance joint data and analytical work with the World Bank with a view to integrating new risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic into their programming.

In conclusion, the Peacebuilding Commission remains committed to identifying ways for collective action from the international community to help address root causes of conflicts and lay the foundation for effective recovery from COVID-19 and building back better in Africa. In this respect, States Members of the United Nations have recently recognized the critical role the PBC plays in fostering a more inclusive and effective multilateralism in support of peacebuilding in Africa. They have also agreed that the Commission should scale up and expand its activities. I would like to reiterate this message. I therefore take this opportunity to encourage the Security Council to seek input more systematically from the PBC on the peacebuilding aspects of peace operations' mandates when they are created, renewed, reviewed or withdrawn. To facilitate this process, for countries and regions under consideration by both the Security Council and the Commission, PBC members would welcome receiving a copy of the Secretary-General's relevant reports to the Security Council and to do so, as far as is practicable, with enough advance notice to allow for the PBC to provide input in a timely manner.

Annex 33**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

Peru welcomes the holding of today's open debate and appreciates the briefings of the briefers, who have agreed on the urgency of addressing the root causes of conflict in Africa as an essential element to rebuild and reinvigorate the social fabric in a post-pandemic world.

We also welcome the commendable work being done by the United Nations and its various agencies to address the scourge of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). But we note that this work needs to be complemented by more supportive action by the world's major Powers, based on stronger political and financial support for the COVAX initiative, which would lead to a significantly greater flow of vaccines to developing countries. We also stress the importance of strengthening the capacities of African health institutions, as well as those responsible for analysing and processing pandemic-related data. Countries that are more developed technologically, in particular, have much to contribute in these areas.

It is clear that the serious impact of this disease on developing countries transcends the political, economic or health spheres. The increasing demand of citizens for basic public services is significantly challenging the legitimacy of Governments and generating intense pressure on democracy and the rule of law.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been compounded by other factors, including climate change, cybercrime, ethnic and racial strife and inequalities, which has fuelled tensions and conflicts.

It is therefore important that post-pandemic reconstruction efforts be based on a comprehensive approach that addresses all these drivers of instability. They should be carried out with an inclusive approach that encourages social cohesion through the increasingly active involvement of women and youth in peacebuilding processes, given their proven valuable contribution to social reconciliation.

In that regard, we emphasize that the international community cannot tolerate the actions of authoritarian regimes that — in their desire to remain in power — undermine democracy, human rights and other fundamental freedoms.

A successful recovery will require enhanced partnerships, both with the African Union and with subregional organizations on the continent. We must take advantage of their expertise on situations in their immediate geographical environment and the catalytic role they can play for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Civil society actors, the private sector and international financial organizations should also be consulted.

We note that peacekeeping operations are also in a position to make substantive contributions to post-pandemic reconstruction. We encourage closer links between peacekeeping operations and local Governments and communities, as only a close relationship with the population will allow for a full understanding of their specific needs. The design and implementation of appropriate communication strategies is particularly useful for that purpose, as is the expansion of community-support projects, as some missions have been offering.

In conclusion, I welcome the Peacebuilding Commission's growing support of the work of the Security Council. That support must be encouraged, both in the framework of mandate renewals for peace operations and transitional contexts, as well as in substantive discussions, such as the one that brings us together today.

In the context of post-pandemic recovery, it is essential to make good use of the Commission's clear comparative advantages, especially when it comes to mobilizing international cooperation and solidarity networks to help the countries most affected by COVID-19.

Annex 34**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations, Francisco Duarte Lopes**

Portugal aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (annex 24) and would like to add the following points in its national capacity.

The economic and social consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic have been felt around the world, but its impact is particularly acute when health services are already fragile due to ongoing conflicts. Only a global ceasefire, as called for by the Secretary-General and in resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2565 (2021), will make it possible to guarantee that all countries, including those in contexts of fragility, are able to recover from the pandemic so that no one is left behind.

Collective action and inclusive multilateral solutions to that end are critical, as is bolstering the effectiveness of multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, as well as its specialized agencies, funds and programmes. The World Health Organization will play a central role in that regard, and we support its reform with a view to strengthening international health regulations.

The least developed countries (LDCs), developing countries and those in situations of vulnerability, namely in the African continent, have shown incredible determination in their national and regional responses to this health crisis. We need to ensure universal and equitable access to vaccines and medicines, as well as access to safe and effective diagnoses for all, if we are to effectively combat current and future pandemics. Vaccination against COVID-19 must be treated as a global public good in solidarity with our partner countries — especially those most in need.

Portugal has contributed financially to multilateral initiatives, namely the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility, which we have funded both through the European Union and in our national capacity and which has already supplied vaccines to African countries; the World Health Organization's Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan; and other relevant instruments of global response, such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator initiative and the Global Vaccine Summit.

Furthermore, Portugal has pledged to send to partner countries 5 per cent of the COVID-19 vaccine shots that will be made available to the country, which corresponds to 1.5 million individual doses. We have also channelled €3.75 million in bilateral cooperation, namely through the supply of medical equipment and training in intensive care.

In order to achieve a fast, steady and resilient recovery, it will be necessary to speed up innovative and decisive joint action towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. Such action is particularly urgent given the setbacks in the progress and financing of LDCs and developing countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the widespread exacerbation of tensions and political turmoil and increasing numbers of people living in extreme poverty, with rising levels of unemployment, particularly for women and youth.

Poverty and inequality are some of the main triggers of social instability in any country. In order to tackle the root causes of conflict, we must bear in mind the complexity of the situations on the ground and address fragility and other endemic circumstances that hinder sustained development and thus require further support from the international community.

Post-pandemic recovery in Africa and around the world must consider the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. This broad perspective of security and

development implies linking conflict prevention, peacebuilding and humanitarian aid with poverty reduction measures.

Partnerships between the various humanitarian, development and security actors on the ground will play a critical role, and must translate into effective coordination and cooperation, acting in a differentiated, articulated and global way, and combining the various instruments at its disposal. This requires greater capacity to carry out joint analysis and to share information among multilateral, bilateral and regional actors.

We need also to strengthen national institutions, including through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, in order to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies, as envisaged in Sustainable Development Goal 16. In that regard, building national capacities to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime should be a priority. In Mozambique, for instance, Portugal has joined other international partners and has contributed financially to multilateral projects through United Nations agencies with a view to enhancing national capacities and supporting internally displaced persons.

Security challenges cannot be faced through defence instruments alone or with a one-size-fits-all approach. We must intensify efforts to ensure an extensive and combined use of political, economic and social instruments, including official development assistance, in order to find better solutions for the continued and sustained development of the countries that are most in need and to boost national capacities to more effectively combat future risks.

Annex 35**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani**

[Original: Arabic]

We congratulate you, Sir, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and wish you success in your endeavours. We express our appreciation to Secretary-General António Guterres; Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme; and Moussa Faki Mahamat, President of the African Union Commission, for their valuable briefings. We endorse the presidential statement (S/PRST/2021/10) issued by the Council today.

The Security Council's continued consideration of ways to address the root causes of conflicts reflects the extent to which conflicts affect humanitarian, economic and social development. The Council's deliberations also indicated that a comprehensive, coordinated and effective response is urgently needed, as part of an integrated approach to maintaining international peace and security.

Africa has enormous and diverse potential, but the increasingly complicated and protracted conflicts it faces cast a pall over its ambitious plans and development and humanitarian programmes. It is therefore crucial that the international community come together to address the root causes of conflicts on the continent and help it focus on implementing the Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations.

At a time when African countries are working, within the framework of the African Union, to confront the dangers of armed conflict and the challenges of sustaining security, stability and development, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has placed an added burden on all areas of life. However, the pandemic has also been instructive, and has provided an additional incentive to strengthen cooperation among African States in order to promote the promising African agenda and achieve comprehensive recovery by formulating sustainable development policies in various areas and strengthening the linkages between peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities, thereby helping to address the root causes of conflicts. At the present time, the international community has a responsibility to assist African countries in strengthening their health systems and institutions and gaining access to vaccines. Here, we reiterate that it is necessary to implement resolution 2565 (2021) concerning a ceasefire in all conflict zones to provide vaccinations, and to support the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility for those in greatest need of assistance, based on the premise that the pandemic is a global challenge that necessitates a global response and the cooperation of all stakeholders.

As part of a strategic partnership with the United Nations, in recent years Qatar, which takes pride in its ties with African countries, has worked tirelessly to help address the root causes of conflict and achieve peace, security and development on the continent. Qatar has thus facilitated mediation on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, in coordination with and under the auspices of the Security Council. The diplomatic mediation efforts of Qatar have led to the resolution of a number of conflicts in Africa and, most recently, helped to re-establish diplomatic relations between Somalia and Kenya, thereby promoting stability on the continent.

In response to the challenges faced by the least developed countries, a group that includes African countries, in their bid to achieve sustainable development, Qatar will host the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. The objective of the conference is to meet the needs of those countries and support their development over the next 10 years, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development. In the same vein, the Qatar Fund for Development is collaborating with the United Nations Development Programme and Germany to build the Accelerator Labs Network, the world's largest and fastest information network on development challenges. Accelerator labs are currently operating in seventy-eight countries, most of them least developed countries and landlocked developing countries in Africa. Their purpose is to address development challenges more effectively and efficiently.

As part of international efforts to eradicate epidemics, the Qatar Fund for Development has signed an agreement with the World Health Organization (WHO) for a three-year project aimed at eradicating tropical and other diseases in 49 African countries, benefiting up to 400 million people.

Qatar recognizes that recovery from the pandemic in Africa is possible only once all recover. Therefore, my country has taken the initiative to provide urgent medical assistance to more than 78 countries, in order to help them combat the pandemic. Qatar has provided a total of over \$88 million in governmental and non-governmental assistance. A total contribution of \$20 million has been made to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. In March 2021, the Qatar Fund for Development and WHO signed a core contribution agreement in the amount of \$10 million to support the thirteenth general programme of work of WHO and for COVID-19 response through the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, with a view to reaching the countries in greatest need. In that same vein, Qatar Airways evacuated more than 3 million people to their homes and delivered essential medical equipment. In February 2021, the company also concluded a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Children's Fund to support the Fund's Humanitarian Airfreight Initiative. Qatar Airways will transport vaccines, medicines, medical devices and vital supplies to ensure rapid and equitable access to vaccines everywhere, including in African countries. It is committed to supporting the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility.

To conclude, Qatar will continue working with its partners under United Nations auspices to address the root causes of conflicts and fulfil its duty to maintain peace and security in Africa and around the world.

Annex 36**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, Cho Hyun**

At the outset, the Republic of Korea commends you for convening today's high-level open debate and offers its deep appreciation to the briefers for sharing their valuable insights.

Africa has tremendous potential and opportunities for growth, yet is faced with multifaceted challenges, from violent extremism to climate change. Furthermore, the socioeconomic impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has exacerbated an already dire situation, aggravating the root causes of conflict. As such, this is indeed a timely opportunity to discuss how the African region can successfully emerge from these challenges and achieve sustainable post-pandemic recovery. Against this backdrop, let me highlight the following four points.

First, my delegation emphasizes the need to strengthen global solidarity and multilateral cooperation to fight the pandemic. As a co-Chair of the Group of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security, the Republic of Korea has been playing an active role in promoting global cooperation for pandemic response and preparedness. In particular, the Republic of Korea has been supporting the COVID-19 response in Africa, including by providing a package of assistance worth approximately \$200 million to 53 African countries last year. The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and Ethiopia are among the key public-health partners in Africa. We also supported the establishment of a COVID-19 diagnosis centre in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the first national laboratory for infectious diseases in Madagascar.

Global cooperation must be intensified to ensure equitable access to, and the distribution of, COVID-19 vaccines. We are encouraged to see shipments of COVID-19 vaccines to African countries through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, but the roll-out should be further scaled up. It is crucial that the international community continue to support the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, including COVAX.

Secondly, we must continue our efforts to mitigate the disproportionate socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 in Africa and invest more on future generations. In particular, I would like to emphasize the importance of educating students and lessening the digital divide to break the perpetuating cycle of inequality.

We are deeply concerned that too many children have lost out on their education during the pandemic. It was especially serious in Africa, where 9 out of 10 children were not connected to the Internet at home, which deprived them of access to remote education. Based on its Digital New Deal policy, the Republic of Korea has been pursuing digital transformation in every aspect of our society and expanding digital official development assistance to developing countries and will continue to work with our African partners to narrow the digital divide.

Thirdly, my delegation emphasizes that the humanitarian-development-peace nexus is indispensable in addressing the region's multidimensional challenges, such as food insecurity, poverty, terrorism and violent extremism, and the ongoing pandemic. All of these complex challenges are closely interlinked with one another and therefore must be tackled in a holistic manner.

In this regard, I would like to highlight the crucial role played by the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in promoting a coherent and integrated approach to addressing challenges. As a platform for convening all relevant actors, the PBC has served a unique bridging role within the United Nations system as a whole, as

was evident in the recent informal exchange between the PBC and the President of the Security Council on 10 May. My delegation encourages the Security Council to engage in a more candid discussion with the PBC and more systematically seek inputs from it, especially on the topic of peacebuilding in Africa.

Last but not least, among the many aspects of root causes of conflicts, climate change is one of the most significant threat multipliers. Many countries in Africa are grappling with the detrimental impacts of climate change, which aggravate humanitarian situations and eventually fuel conflicts in the region. Now is the time for us to exert concerted efforts to address the urgent challenge of climate change. In particular, we need to pay more attention to the adaptation aspect of climate change in Africa.

For its part, the Republic of Korea will host the second Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 (P4G) summit in Seoul this month. The P4G summit will serve as a multi-stakeholder platform to bolster enhanced climate action and sustainable development. We hope that this could be a steppingstone for the success of the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and also an opportunity to promote green recovery from the pandemic.

The Republic of Korea has always been a close partner with Africa and its peoples. Korea has, since 2013, contributed more than \$200 million to the African Union (AU) to promote sustainable peace and development. As an avid supporter of peace in Africa, Korea has also contributed more than \$14 million to the AU's peace and security activities, including the deployment of a Level 2 Mobile Field Hospital in Mali and its troops to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. To further elevate the partnership, in 2018, we established the Korea-Africa Foundation under the auspices of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs so as to further extend cooperation in both the public and private sectors.

Despite the multiple challenges that Africa is facing now, I remain confident that, through enhanced global solidarity, we will be able to overcome them together by addressing the root causes of conflict and beyond. I expect the fifth Korea-Africa Forum, to be held in Korea this year, will be a valuable opportunity to further enhance Korea-Africa partnership and promote sustainable peace and development in the region.

Annex 37**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations, Ion Jinga**

Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its member States (annex 24). I would like now to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Many around the globe experienced the past year as the worst year since the Second World War. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic generated a global economic crisis with an array of direct and indirect effects on unfolding conflicts with increasing tensions and political violence, threatening the progress that had already been achieved.

Armed conflicts, ethnic divides and inequality between groups remain a harsh reality in Africa and elsewhere, creating long-term divisions that have an impact on the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts. Electoral systems have been put under stress in a number of places in Africa, while terrorist and armed groups have sought to exploit the pandemic and create instability. The continent's economic conditions have been additionally strained by lower commodity prices, tourism revenues and remittances. Food security remains a matter of concern, particularly in conflict-affected areas. The pandemic underlined once again the instrumental role played by such home-grown solutions as the African Union's "Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020" initiative, aiming at achieving a conflict-free Africa, preventing genocide, making peace a reality for all and freeing the continent from wars, violent conflicts, human rights violations and humanitarian disasters.

Equitable access to safe, efficient, and affordable COVID-19 vaccines is essential to putting things back on track in Africa and all around the globe. We commend the efforts of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention to coordinate a continent-wide response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Romania has stepped up to help combat the impact of COVID-19 beyond its borders, having joined the Coronavirus Global Response pledging initiative and the European Union's efforts aimed at delivering on international vaccine solidarity. In support of the Team Europe Initiative's financial package and the United Nations Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19, more than 70 per cent of the projects sponsored under Romania's 2020 national annual plan for international cooperation for development and humanitarian assistance have been redirected to respond to the more urgent needs resulting from the pandemic.

My country therefore reoriented several projects in 2020 towards responding to health emergencies in sub-Saharan Africa. The first three partner countries for the development activities last year were the Democratic Republic of Congo, representing 18 per cent of the total budget of the annual plan, the United Republic of Tanzania, representing 10 per cent, and Zambia, also representing 10 per cent. Other African partner countries for development were Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger, Malawi and Uganda. Romania has also made voluntary contributions to the African Union.

Progress in vaccine access has been uneven, and countries affected by conflict and insecurity are particularly at risk of being left behind. Romania co-sponsored resolution 2565 (2021), calling for strengthening international cooperation and supporting such multilateral approaches as the COVAX facility and other relevant initiatives, in order to facilitate equitable and affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines in armed-conflict situations, post-conflict situations and complex humanitarian emergencies. As the Secretary-General pointed out,

“At this critical moment, vaccine equity is the biggest moral test before the global community.”

In Africa and elsewhere, peace and development are interrelated and cannot thrive without full respect for human rights and good governance. Post-COVID-19 recovery is an opportunity to build back better and take important steps forward on the path towards fulfilling the goals set forth in the African Union’s Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Africa has enormous human potential, and the time has come to make best use of the talent and dedication of its peoples and thereby fulfil their aspirations. In this respect, Africa needs to attract foreign direct investments, generate employment, facilitate economic integration and improve access to education, innovation and digitalization.

Romania fully supports African countries in their aspirations for democracy, good governance, responsive institutions and the rule of law. As an active participant in both European Union- and United Nations-led peace missions in Africa, my country welcomed resolution 2457 (2019), which endorsed the African Union’s initiative to end violent conflicts in Africa and joined the Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire. In this respect, it is of paramount importance to strengthen confidence-building measures and to enhance the early-warning, conflict-prevention and mediation capacities of the African continent. The culture of peace should be deeply rooted through democracy, access to justice and respect for human rights. Creating lasting peace and security involves the participation of men, women and youth. Women and youth should be more often included in peace negotiations and reconciliation processes.

One of the priorities of Romania’s mandate at the helm of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission in 2018 was to keep international attention focused on the real challenges facing the Sahel region, analyse the political, social, economic, security and environmental challenges in the region and consider the way in which States Members of the United Nations can contribute in a coherent, coordinated and active way to solving them. The annual session of the Peacebuilding Commission held on 12 November 2018 had as its central theme “Strengthening and perpetuating peace in the Sahel region”, while the links between climate change and the consolidation and perpetuation of peace in the Sahel region were for the first time discussed in an annual joint meeting of the Commission and the Economic and Social Council, upon Romania’s initiative.

The hard times we face represent a powerful wake-up call for all of us and an opportunity to reaffirm our trust in multilateralism, international law, a rules-based order and democratic values. Only by working together, by investing in our interdependent resilience will we be able to overcome the global challenges. Romania will always be a steady partner and supporter of the countries of Africa in their quest for peace, security, democracy and development.

Annex 38**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the United Nations**

The Republic of Rwanda congratulates the People's Republic of China for assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. Rwanda expresses its appreciation for the Chinese presidency organizing today's important debate.

We thank Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, for their informative briefings.

Today's debate pursues a single combined objective: to address the issues that sustain insecurity in Africa and to promote sound post-pandemic recovery in the region. The pursuit of durable peace requires the collaborative engagement of African countries and the international community. Rwanda therefore welcomes the important step of meeting today and the opportunity it affords us to reaffirm our commitment to the peacemaking process in Africa.

I would like to note, first, that Africa is not an exception. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has adversely affected all States Members of the United Nations present and has undoubtedly exacerbated pre-existing issues in countries experiencing or emerging from conflict. Inequalities in global COVID-19 vaccine distribution is a matter of shared concern to many developing countries. Rebuilding resilient social systems and economies is also a shared priority.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that global health security is intertwined. For this reason, our global recovery plans must also be up to par in order to ensure that we collectively defeat a pandemic that has cost millions of lives and derailed our economies.

At the onset of the pandemic, Africa recorded relatively low numbers of COVID-19-related deaths, largely because many countries adopted vigorous measures and restrictions, thereby averting much of the devastation the disease wrought early on. Even with such preparedness, many lives were unfortunately lost to the pandemic, and we have seen the rise of new variants on the continent and recorded many economic downturns.

The implicit threat now is that if the pandemic goes unchecked, it will overwhelm and, in some cases, destroy African health systems. This means that even infectious diseases that had already been contained on the continent will resurface. It also means that we are likely to see the rise of more unpredictable variants. In the light of this, the potential collapse of African health systems puts global public health in danger.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic may trigger unrest in already fragile regions as well as other social disruptions. As the African Union (AU) and its member States rightly pivoted their efforts and finances towards fighting the pandemic, resources and time were unfortunately taken away from other bilateral and multilateral peacemaking mechanisms. We need regional and global collaborative efforts to tackle the foreseeable pandemic's knock-on effects so that they do not inevitably fuel conflicts.

For that to happen, equity in vaccine access, manufacturing and distribution is vital. As things stand right now, many developed nations are well advanced with their vaccination rollouts, while most African countries have run out of initial

supplies. The continent has recorded a small number of COVID-19 shots mainly because it has almost no vaccine-manufacturing capability.

As President Paul Kagame, the president of Rwanda has noted,

“The only way to ensure vaccine equity is to produce more vaccines where they are needed. So long as Africa remains dependent on other regions for vaccines, we will always be at the back of the queue whenever there is scarcity.”

Vaccine nationalism slows our ability to defeat COVID-19. The pandemic presents an opportunity for us to create action-oriented plans that ensure scientific independence in Africa, which can empower the continent to tackle COVID-19 and become an equal partner in global efforts to handle future public-health crises.

Financing for health is also a core development issue. Africa’s economies were among the fastest growing in the world, but the pandemic’s economic fallout has been enormous. While developing countries have been able to inject trillions of dollars into their economies, African countries often do not have the fiscal space to do the same.

The post-pandemic recovery strategies for Africa must include mechanisms for debt restructuring. Reducing debt burdens for African economies will allow resources for public investment in such areas as education, health and infrastructure. Investments in human capital can also enhance competitiveness and productivity, while lowering the risk of long-term damage from the pandemic.

The ongoing Summit on Financing African Economies hosted by France is expected to inject \$100 billion into the International Monetary Fund’s special drawing-rights monetary reserves for African States by October. Similar agreements and plans between Africa’s foreign partners and Governments of the region will chart a new path, deepen ties and ensure multilateral post-pandemic recovery.

When it comes to root causes of conflict in Africa, it is important, first and foremost, not to generalize them. The situation in the Sahel region differs from the issues in the Great Lakes region of Africa. When it comes to designing sustainable solutions, there is no one-size-fits-all response. The root causes of conflict in Africa must be assessed and viewed within their individual contexts and complexities.

In this regard, we offer the following recommendations. First, there should be increased support for the AU and its member States in tackling ongoing and emerging conflicts. The AU is well placed to be aware of the diverse root causes of conflicts in various regions of Africa and how the pandemic has affected them. Holistic support for the AU will therefore increase the Union’s ownership and response time, helping it to craft solutions that accurately reflect the right regional context, culture and values.

Partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations, together with the division of labour and support for subregional organizations should be institutionalized, as regional and subregional institutions are often better placed to provide security and political solutions to conflict on the continent.

We must support inclusive governance. Post-pandemic recovery in Africa must centre on an inclusive approach that ensures that development trickles down to the vulnerable populations and regions that need it the most. That could be in the form of a gender-sensitive approach, a youth-sensitive approach and so on. The goal in that regard is to design long-term strategies that cater to disenfranchised groups, lead to overall development and prevent conflict in the process.

We have to create a framework that recognizes that the root causes of conflict in Africa are multifaceted and therefore require multifaceted solutions.

Any meaningful contribution to lasting peace in Africa must abandon the self-defeating notion that there are any issues endemic to Africa. Problems exist, but so do solutions. Addressing instability on the continent requires a case-by-case analysis and proactive effort to implement and sustain long-term solutions.

We have a responsibility to the address long-standing causes of recurring conflicts in the region, but that has to come from an informed standpoint and unwavering commitment to see peace solutions through. This debate is a step in the right direction and an opportunity for the United Nations to join and support the already ongoing pandemic recovery efforts and push for peace on the African continent.

Annex 39**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, Michal Mlynár**

First of all, I would like to thank the Chinese presidency of the Security Council for organizing this timely open debate, which could generate more focused attention on the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on conflict-affected countries in Africa, as well as on the various challenges faced by vulnerable countries and populations on the African continent.

Slovakia associates itself with the statement of the European Union (EU) (annex 24). Allow me to make a few additional observations.

This is a critical time for African countries affected by conflict. The challenges that they face have been multiplied by COVID-19. Many countries and regions are confronted with escalating humanitarian crises, high levels of displacement, food shortages and collapsing economies. The direct and secondary consequences of the pandemic interacting with existing security and humanitarian crises are adding another layer of complexity to already fragile situations. Overall, the pandemic risks setting such countries even further behind in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global crisis that requires a multilateral response. Solidarity and close cooperation are crucial. Rapid, safe and fair access to health care and vaccinations for all is an investment in health, as well as an investment in peace and security. To win the battle against this pandemic, vaccines and health security should be accessible to all across the globe. I would like to underline the fact that the EU played a leading role in setting up the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, considering it the best vehicle for delivering on international vaccine solidarity, including to African countries.

While dealing with the menace of the pandemic, maintaining peace and security in Africa remains paramount. Despite increased peacebuilding efforts in recent decades, violence and conflict, at times exacerbated by terrorism and the spread of violent extremism, transnational organized crime and weak institutions, continue to pose a challenge in some areas and will inevitably complicate efforts to tackle the consequences of the pandemic.

In that context, we need to ensure the predictable and sustained financing of United Nations peacebuilding activities at a time when the impact of the multifaceted crises posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in African conflict-affected countries is so significant and the work of the United Nations, including in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, has become more challenging. The United Nations system and relevant actors must stay the course in their support to peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts.

At the same time, Slovakia is convinced that the security sector is a key component in Government response to various challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic in fragile African countries and regions. Reviews of existing mandates of the United Nations missions in countries facing complex challenges must consider the existence of exit strategies that seek to help lay the foundations for long-term and sustainable peace.

For years, Slovakia has identified security sector reform as one of the key elements for effective conflict prevention and successful post-conflict rebuilding and stabilization. The direct experience from many United Nations peace missions and operations, including in African countries, clearly shows that nationally led and inclusive security sector reform is key to developing security sector institutions that

are capable of effectively responding to the specific security needs and can actively manage drivers of fragility.

The Security Council can play an important role in helping the international community focus on those who are affected by conflict and insecurity and have been disproportionately hit by the pandemic. That includes bringing attention to the devastating effects that the pandemic has on people in fragile settings and remaining open to considering the role that peace operations can play in that context.

Annex 40**Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Mathu Joyini**

I would like to thank the President of the Security Council for convening this timely open debate on “Peace and security in Africa: addressing root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa”. We also thank the briefers for their insightful briefings.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has had a devastating impact across the world, affecting many countries but to different degrees. Due to their fragility, conflict and post-conflict countries, as well as countries in transition, are more affected by this pandemic, especially when their scarce resources for conflict prevention, peacebuilding, recovery and reconstruction had to be diverted to addressing the pandemic. That means that some of the lingering challenges that those countries face, such as a lack of effective and efficient State institutions, unemployment, inequality and poverty, remain — and in some cases have deteriorated due to the pandemic.

In many parts of Africa, the pandemic has undermined the progress made thus far towards achieving durable peace and development, particularly in conflict-affected countries on the continent. It has also impacted progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the region’s aspirations espoused in Agenda 2063 of the African Union. However, it has also presented unique opportunities. In that context, allow me to make the following points.

South Africa remains concerned about the threats and risks that impede efforts to maintain international peace and security. We note that the Security Council has deliberated at length over the years about the challenges facing various countries and regions that may impede their stability. In the case of the African continent, the root causes and drivers of conflict are persistent, myriad and well-documented. However, there are also emerging threats that require collective efforts to be resolved, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic.

We are pleased that the Security Council has been involved as part of the global response to the pandemic, as its impact is cross-cutting and affects global peace and security, particularly in countries affected by conflict. We have seen its effects across the world, especially on sustainable development and economic growth, both of which are important to address barriers to lasting peace and stability, especially in fragile situations.

We have observed positive developments in countries, a majority of which are developed, where responses to the virus have been effective, particularly in countries where vaccines and socioeconomic recovery plans have been administered and implemented respectively. However, many countries have unfortunately been left behind, particularly in Africa, wherein the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities and already strained and under-resourced public health systems and infrastructure.

South Africa reiterates its call for the international community to ensure equitable and universal access to COVID-19 vaccines for all countries, including African countries. We also restate our firm condemnation to vaccine nationalism, which is counter-productive to the realization of a post-pandemic world, because no one country is safe until all countries are safe.

We welcome the recent announcements by different countries in support of waivers to intellectual property rights, which are permitted in existing mechanisms, to expedite the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. That will boost supply to accelerate the production of affordable vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics,

which will save many lives and livelihoods, particularly in Africa. We look forward to the outcomes of negotiations currently under way at the World Trade Organization in that regard. For South Africa, that is an essential step towards sustainable post-pandemic recovery efforts on the African continent.

Post-pandemic recovery efforts will require partnerships and financial support for regional and subregional institutions. Under the leadership of the former Chairperson of the African Union (AU), President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa, who is also the AU Champion for COVID-19 Response, together with all African countries, developed a comprehensive COVID-19 strategy, which included, among other things, the AU COVID-19 Response Fund, the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team and the African Medical Supplies Platform, all aimed at contributing to the recovery efforts of countries on the continent. The AU also recognizes that key to recovery efforts is the need to address the financial impact of the pandemic with international financial institutions to discuss financial support and debt relief for African countries in order to extricate them from the predicament caused by the pandemic.

We remain supportive of the existing normative frameworks of the AU that promote peace and security on the continent within the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture. Issues pertaining to good governance, early warning, conflict prevention, preventative diplomacy, post-conflict reconstruction and development are firmly entrenched in those normative frameworks that guide members of the AU. The implementation of those instruments is therefore cardinal to post-pandemic recovery efforts on the continent.

South Africa also believes that post-pandemic recovery will require support for peace processes by supporting peacebuilding initiatives. The United Nations, through its bodies such as the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Security Council, should harmonize its engagement with the AU and regional economic communities/regional mechanisms on recovery and reconstruction efforts as determined by the concerned countries. That will also reduce any overlapping and duplication of effort on the ground.

We also see merit for both the PBC and the Security Council to consider appointing focal points to ensure coordination regarding development issues in Africa and to monitor the impact of the advice from the PBC to the Security Council, particularly on mandate renewal of relevant peacekeeping missions, special political missions and transitions.

The international community can also support the African continent in addressing the root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery by strengthening partnerships within and outside of the United Nations with different stakeholders, such as the private sector and civil society organizations at the local level. That will promote and ensure national ownership, inclusivity, community engagement and preventative diplomacy based on nationally led solutions. We also reiterate the importance of the full and meaningful involvement of women and youth in all efforts to promote peace and security, including in conflict prevention, post-conflict and reconstruction and recovery.

In conclusion, it is of paramount importance that the Security Council continue to be proactive and address issues pertaining to conflict prevention, such as addressing the root causes and drivers of conflict, in order for it to achieve its mandate and responsibilities envisioned in the Charter of the United Nations.

Annex 41**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations, Agustín Santos Maraver**

[Original: Spanish]

I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate.

Spain associates itself with the statement submitted by the European Union (annex 24) and wishes to add the following comments in its national capacity.

The global pandemic has exposed the unavoidable need to strengthen multilateralism, in particular where the most vulnerable are. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has tested the nexus among peacekeeping and security, humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. We have an obligation to do much more. We must act. And we must do it now.

The Security Council could seek to introduce changes to some of its mandates that would make it possible for deployed peacekeeping missions to adapt and call for truces, to open up humanitarian corridors and to create the necessary health capacities through multilateral action.

The Security Council already has at its disposal an extraordinarily valuable strategic framework: that provided by its resolution 2535 (2020). Tunisia, France and other members of the Security Council, whose work Spain is particularly grateful for, played a very prominent role in the response to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire in March last year. That call remains in full effect.

If it made sense when COVID-19 pandemic was raging, it makes even more sense now that a vaccine solution is in sight. The international community must persevere in its efforts to make vaccines available everywhere. At the beginning it was about preventing deaths; now we are preventing deaths and saving lives. The Security Council has the right tools at its disposal. I would like to mention two in particular.

Resolution 2565 (2021), which was initiated by the British rotating presidency in February, is a timely and useful tool to expand vaccination in conflict zones and should be fully implemented. Now that vaccination plans are on the horizon, respect for humanitarian corridors is more necessary than ever in those environments. It is now not only combatants who pose a risk to civilians; it is the entire population that is at risk. Many countries in Africa are seeing their basic social services affected by the pandemic. The right of people to access those services takes on new meaning with the pandemic and is especially relevant in conflict zones.

Resolution 2286 (2016) is also more relevant than ever. Respect for medical personnel, transport and infrastructure, as set out in the resolution, must be extended to all institutions, some medical and some not, that are responsible for assisting and vaccinating COVID-19 patients.

This is not the first time that the Security Council has had to address risks related to public health and peacekeeping. It has responded to other challenges before, such as the mass polio vaccination in the Sudan in 2005 and the Ebola threat in 2014. If it did so then, why not do so at this crucial moment, when the challenge is truly global and of unprecedented proportions? Spain believes that the Security Council should coordinate this essential response in three ways.

First, it must implement effective actions. As the Secretary-General points out, COVID-19 is a common enemy that must be fought. For the first time since the creation of the United Nations, a humanitarian crisis of natural origin affects all

nations across borders and divides. Humanitarian disasters caused by people must yield to this humanitarian disaster caused by nature that affects us all.

Spain has contributed to the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator initiative and its COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility mechanism since its inception and supports rapid progress in the creation of new vaccine pooling mechanisms to ensure universal access to, and distribution of, vaccines.

In November 2020, Spain signed the Riyadh Declaration, in which the Group of Twenty countries expressed their determination to help the most vulnerable and fragile countries, especially in Africa, to fight the pandemic. To that end, Spain pledged to implement the Debt Service Suspension Initiative in order to allow eligible countries to suspend interest payments on official bilateral debt until June 2021.

Secondly, we call for the appropriate coordination of peace and security, development and human rights instruments. As a strategic and special partner in Africa, Spain is fully aware of this need. The third Africa Plan and the actions included in the Focus Africa 2023 are a good reflection of that. We must strengthen our cooperation with African countries and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the African Union's Agenda 2063. In this area, it remains key to broaden and deepen joint action with regional organizations.

Thirdly, we must extend the response to other areas. Spain hopes that the actions and lessons learned by the Security Council and multilateral bodies in Africa can in turn be applied to other areas of the planet where serious conflicts also persist.

Annex 42**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, Pascale Baeriswyl**

[Original: English and French]

Switzerland thanks China for organizing this debate, and the speakers for their contributions.

The impact of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on the African continent at the social, economic and political levels is profound, as the African Union (AU), through its Commission and its Peace and Security Council, has communicated since the beginning of the pandemic. Today's interventions attest to this. Less than 2 per cent of vaccine doses distributed worldwide have been administered in Africa, and hundreds of millions of people on the continent are at risk of being left behind. The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention is playing a major role in the fight against the pandemic and the delivery of vaccines on the continent. We must ensure distribution in a spirit of solidarity. To date, Switzerland has committed over SwF600 million to respond to the COVID-19 crisis in the health and other sectors. We also support the Centres' Rumour Tracking Report, which combats the spread of false information about the pandemic.

Like climate change, the pandemic is exacerbating existing conflicts and requires the full attention of the Security Council. Three measures are important to better respond to these challenges.

First, an effective fight against the pandemic requires the cessation of hostilities and the prevention of new conflicts. In that regard, Switzerland supports various efforts in Africa and elsewhere, including for the prevention of violent extremism. Through the AU, we have supported the training of female mediators. Switzerland calls on the Security Council to redouble its efforts to promote ceasefire agreements, in accordance with resolution 2532 (2020), in order to establish negotiating spaces and favourable conditions for post-pandemic reconstruction.

Secondly, peace, development and human rights are mutually reinforcing in the context of a long-term response that addresses the root causes of conflict. The Peacebuilding Commission is ideally placed to promote coherence among the three pillars of the United Nations system and partnerships among multilateral and regional actors in support of the priorities of Member States and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. We welcome the exchange between the presidency of the Security Council and the AU Commission ahead of this open debate. We encourage the Council to take full account of the Commission's expertise in its work.

Thirdly, the entire population must be included to build back better and sustainably. We must rebuild trust between people and State institutions. Women and youth are among the most affected by the consequences of this pandemic and, at the same time, are key agents of transformation. Even before the pandemic, Switzerland contributed to the creation of employment opportunities and the development of professional training for young people in the Great Lakes region. The Security Council must take into account the key contribution of women and youth to peace and sustainable development and provide them with increased support, including through United Nations regional mandates such as the Offices for West Africa and the Sahel and Central Africa. It must also take into account the contributions of civil society and human rights defenders in post-pandemic reconstruction and sustaining peace efforts.

We call on the Security Council to ensure the full implementation of resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2565 (2021) across all country-specific situations on its agenda. Switzerland will remain a reliable partner in the joint efforts for conflict prevention and post-pandemic reconstruction in Africa.

Annex 43**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations**

The United Arab Emirates thanks China for organizing this open debate. This is an opportunity to collectively enhance our understanding of the pandemic's impact on conflict-affected countries in Africa and to discuss methods of cooperation to jointly address the root causes of conflict and curb this pandemic.

Since the onset of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the pandemic has severely challenged health-care systems around the world. It has hindered Government capacities to deliver services, and the crisis has been particularly acute in already-fragile States and situations of armed conflict. The United Arab Emirates is alarmed by the recent report from the World Health Organization that less than 2 per cent of the COVID-19 vaccine doses administered globally have been in Africa. The United Arab Emirates believes that all communities, particularly those affected by conflict, must be supported by robust health-care systems. That is more critical than ever in the face of COVID-19.

The pandemic is also now a key contributor to the economic and development challenges that are the root causes of conflict globally, including in African countries on the Security Council's agenda. The United Arab Emirates has been particularly concerned about African Union estimates that the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to destroy nearly 20 million jobs, both in the formal and informal sectors. Unemployment has disproportionately affected young people, whose level of unemployment is twice that of older adults and is especially relevant given that Africa is the world's youngest continent.

The United Arab Emirates believes in the importance of investing in youth. Accordingly, in February 2020, it announced that it will invest \$500 million in African economies, with a focus on youth and digitalization, through the United Arab Emirates Consortium for Africa. The United Arab Emirates is committed to fostering opportunities, particularly for young people, so that they can look forward with optimism to a future that is firmly in their control.

Terrorism and violence also continue to destabilize many countries around the world, including in the African continent. The Sahel region continues to be threatened by terrorist groups and intercommunal violence. The United Arab Emirates is committed to strengthening collective efforts to boost security and stability in the Sahel and continues to support the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), including through the G-5 Defence College in Nouakchott, tasked with training military officers from G-5 Sahel countries.

The United Arab Emirates recognizes that Africa is extremely diverse and that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions, but we would like to highlight four collective actions that have a track record of addressing the root causes of conflict in fragile regions.

First, we need to overcome the pandemic. In line with these efforts, we need to make vaccines more accessible, including by lowering their cost and improving logistics to reach remote areas. The United Arab Emirates has undertaken a number of initiatives in that regard. We recently pledged vaccines and logistical support to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, and the Emirati company Dubai Ports World has partnered with UNICEF to support the Fund's leading role in procuring and supplying 2 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines and auxiliary vaccination supplies on behalf of the COVAX Facility.

The United Arab Emirates also continues to send medical assistance to more than 25 countries in the African continent. To date, we have deployed more than 30 flights, carrying 259 tons of medical supplies. In addition, the United Arab Emirates has been proud to support the global relief efforts of the United Nations, with Dubai hosting the Organization's largest logistics hub, which was responsible for distributing some 80 per cent of the total personal protective equipment for United Nations States Members in the early stages of the pandemic.

Secondly, investment in development is important to achieving peace. That is why we need to rapidly scale up solutions for inclusive climate adaptation and concentrate the Organization's development efforts in fragile regions. As part of that work, we must continue to help farmers to cope with droughts, extreme weather and altered seasons through new technology and approaches. To support such work, the United Arab Emirates has joined with a number of countries to launch the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate, which catalyses public investment in climate-smart agriculture and national agricultural research and extension services. The United Arab Emirates is also a supporter of the Hand-in-Hand initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in order to provide agricultural technical advisory services in fragile settings.

Thirdly, we need to continue to strengthen cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in the continent, such as the African Union and the regional economic communities, as well as its member States, in order to address the root causes of conflict. The strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union is of paramount importance in addressing complex peace and security challenges in Africa.

And lastly, all of these efforts are futile if women and girls are left behind. Their specific needs must be taken into account through gender analysis and their involvement in decision-making — whether on immunization, socioeconomic development, climate security or conflict prevention and resolution. As we aim for more peaceful and stable societies in the long run, we must secure equal access to education and health care for women and girls, as well as ensure their full, equal and meaningful inclusion in all matters relevant to peace and security. In that regard, one of the main objectives of my country's Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak Women, Peace and Security Initiative is to boost the participation of women in the security sector. More than 100 women from the African continent have already been trained through this initiative.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates takes this opportunity to renew its commitment to working with partners to maintain international peace and security in Africa, particularly during our Security Council term from 2022 to 2023.

Annex 44**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe to the United Nations, Petronellar Nyagura**

I thank you for convening this important debate on addressing the root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa.

In the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (General Assembly resolution 75/1), the Heads of State and Government committed to honour the promise to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and create a better world for future generations. While we have all the tools we need to create a better world, we may not achieve our aspirations for the future we want without peace and security to sustain it. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has increased the vulnerabilities of most countries in special situations, including those in conflict situations. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, studies already indicated that many developing countries were not on track to achieve sustainable development by 2030. The pandemic's devastating impacts have exacerbated poverty and inequalities among and between nations, further jeopardizing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063, and threatening stability in many countries.

Conflicts in Africa account for 70 per cent of situations on the Security Council's agenda. With the adoption of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 — the continent's long-term vision to foster sustainable and inclusive development — African leaders recognized that peace and development are inextricably linked. To free the African continent from wars, civil strife and humanitarian crises and create a conducive environment for Africa's development, African leaders adopted the initiative to silence the guns in Africa by 2020 as the flagship programme on peace and security of Agenda 2063. While silencing the guns by 2020 may have been too ambitious, the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic made the objective even more difficult, as African countries were forced to turn their attention towards the pressing priority of containing what started as a health crisis with devastating socioeconomic impacts. The pandemic is exacerbating all factors that drive instability, thus hindering our efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts.

The COVID-19 pandemic further complicated efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, threatening to derail progress achieved since the adoption of the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. Conflict-affected areas and fragile African States have been more vulnerable to the economic shocks triggered by the pandemic. African countries therefore require enhanced support to sustain efforts to end conflicts as they try to build back better and emerge stronger and more resilient from the pandemic. To achieve that, it is imperative that the United Nations focus on the socioeconomic impacts of the health crisis, which are some of the root causes of conflicts. These underlying causes range from marginalization to exclusion, discrimination, underdevelopment, discrimination and racism, as well as emerging threats to peace and security posed by terrorist and armed groups that have sought to exploit the pandemic.

Although the pandemic's health effects have been milder on the African continent than in other parts of the world, the socioeconomic impacts have been devastating. The World Bank projects that recession in sub-Saharan Africa will force millions of people into poverty and increase food insecurity. Declining revenues and increased debt burdens have hampered most African Governments from providing social safety nets for their people, thus leading to increased political tensions in many African countries.

Even though the global focus is currently on the fight against the pandemic, strong multilateral cooperation is also required to address the high debt levels and liquidity challenges of many African countries. The international community will need to ensure adequate access to international liquidity for low-income countries as infections continue to surge in other parts of the world.

In Zimbabwe, our efforts to address the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are severely undermined by the continued imposition of illegal unilateral coercive measures by some powerful countries. In our view, such measures are contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law. They have extra-territorial implications and violate the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States. Their application affects the possibility of a fair and predictable international trading system that benefits all. Unilateral coercive measures also violate human rights, including the right to development. We therefore call upon those that have imposed the illegal sanctions on us to lift them unconditionally.

As the international community continues to work on the recovery from the impact of the pandemic, at the centre of the recovery should continue to be equitable, affordable access for all to safe, quality, efficacious and effective COVID-19 vaccines. In our view, unless vaccines are made available, affordable and accessible to all, many vulnerable people, including those in conflict situations, will suffer. Greater international cooperation among countries, international financial institutions and major pharmaceutical companies is required, with the United Nations and its specialized agencies playing a central role. We note with concern the uneven progress on vaccine access and wish to underscore the importance of strengthening the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines to all countries. The emergence of more infectious and transmittable variants has added urgency to equitable access to vaccines.

We are at a defining moment in the history of humankind with only 10 years left to achieve the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Global cooperation and solidarity are no longer an option but a necessity to live up to the promise of the future we want and leaving no one behind. In this regard, in building back better, more resilient and sustainable societies, the need for effective multilateralism and integrated approaches that tackle the root causes of conflicts and promoting development cannot be overemphasized. An interconnected world requires international cooperation in which the United Nations, Member States, international financial institutions, regional organizations, trading blocs and other stake holders work closely and effectively.

The role of regional and subregional organisations will be critical for African countries recover sustainably from the pandemic. As first responders to crisis, such organizations have unique knowledge and understanding of the root causes of conflicts in their respective areas and can use their comparative advantages in conflict prevention and crises management. In that context, the partnership between the AU and the United Nations needs to be strengthened to effectively address the challenges that face the continent. Such cooperation is more critical than ever in an era of increasingly complex and urgent crises.