

**Mr. Mavros (Cyprus):**

At the outset, let me express our sincere gratitude to Sweden for convening this open debate, as well as to commend the new Secretary-General for outlining his promising vision.

Cyprus aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to add the following in its national capacity.

With the new Secretary-General taking office, we welcome this opportunity to re-invigorate the focus on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. As a country facing a long-standing conflict, with first-hand experience on the numerous ways in which a conflict can be detrimental, we warmly welcome the vision of the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, to drive

forward the sustaining peace agenda, with a particular focus on conflict prevention.

It is undeniable that the United Nations is dealing with an unprecedented number of ongoing conflicts, which seriously impedes the effort to allocate resources and funds in such a way as to achieve the desired shift towards conflict prevention. It has been well established that the costs associated with conflict resolution, humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping operations can be much higher than conflict prevention. That clearly indicates how the conflicts currently under way also limit the capacity of the United Nations to prevent future conflicts.

One of the key determinants of building and sustaining peace is timely political leadership. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that the Council and the new Secretary-General pave the way for much-needed consensus within the Security Council, especially on the political track and at times of humanitarian emergencies.

In order to achieve lasting peace, the Council must explore ways of improving its ability to prevent conflicts and facilitate the establishment of dialogue on a political level, in line with the principle of nationally owned and nationally driven political processes. It has been stated repeatedly in this organ and beyond that there can be no sustainable military solution to ongoing conflicts. We would add that there can be no sustainable peace without ensuring local inclusive ownership of the peace process and of the eventual peace agreement. We encourage shifting the focus to political-level dialogue. Moreover, we believe that the role of the Council and the Secretary-General in the framework prescribed by the Charter of the United Nations is vital to the accomplishment of lasting peace.

Action in conflict prevention and peacekeeping needs to be conducted in compliance with

the principles of neutrality, objectivity and non-bias, in line with agreed mandates. Those principles should be applied as an integral part of the role of the United Nations to ensure the restoration of law and order and compliance with international law. Neutrality must not be interpreted as the median line between legality and illegality.

It is necessary to highlight the link between development and security as a key determinant in preventing conflicts and sustaining peace. Widening gaps and increased inequalities are the yeast of new conflicts. In that regard, a shift towards a more all-encompassing and diverse approach to conflict prevention is imperative, including incorporating the basic elements of the sustaining peace agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and interlinking the recommendations and proposals for action put forward in the reports on peacekeeping reform (see S/2015/446), the peacebuilding architecture (see S/2015/490) and the women and peace and security agenda.

In conclusion, there is significant political and financial justification for a collective, United Nations system-wide recommitment to conflict prevention. This open debate provides a valuable opportunity for all Member States to express their individual commitment to the new vision of conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Therefore, Cyprus also calls upon Security Council members to reiterate their own commitment to demonstrate the political will and leadership necessary to ensure that conflict prevention and sustaining peace can be tangible goals for the world.