

Mr. Vale de Almeida:

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 28 member States of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries, Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement. The full text of my statement is being distributed. I will try to limit my statement to a few remarks.

The first one is to thank Sweden for its initiative in organizing this open debate, the second one to thank Secretary-General Guterres for a very convincing outline of what needs to be done and for reminding us of the clear imperative for all of us to work as hard as we can, collectively, on finally getting prevention right, because we know that we have often failed on many fronts. As Mr. Guterres has said, “trillions of dollars are spent destroying societies and economies”. The human suffering that we are currently witnessing is immense and, frankly, shameful. We therefore wholeheartedly support the Secretary-General’s call to “put peace first”, and welcome the strong emphasis that he places on prevention.

Security and development are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and are key to preventing crises and to achieving sustainable peace. The link permeates the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The General Assembly and the Security Council have both agreed that sustaining peace is the joint responsibility of Governments and societies and is supported by the international community. The high-level reviews underlined the need to prioritize prevention in order to break the cycle of responding too late.

Prevention is better than firefighting, and sustaining efforts for peace reduces human and financial costs immensely in the long run. We know that we must develop a political culture of acting sooner in response to the risk of violent conflict. And we must act together, if we want to have any chance of success.

The European Union’s new global strategy entitled “Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe” emphasizes the importance of acting promptly on prevention. It also emphasizes the importance of an integrated and comprehensive approach to conflict, and the EU’s commitment to working through the multilateral system, with the United Nations at its core. Building on the comprehensive approach and working in an interconnected manner, the EU will use the global strategy to step up its efforts and capacities to strengthen the way we bring together institutions, expertise and instruments and work with member States on prevention, resolution and stabilization. Making coherent use of all the policies at the EU’s disposal is essential, much as the United

Nations tries to work coherently across all of its pillars. The EU is working with the United Nations on early- warning capacities. If we are to prevent the emergence, re-emergence and escalation of violent conflict, early warning is indispensable. But generating early action is the key. Mediation is recognized as an effective tool for preventing conflicts, as well as for resolving them.

Building and sustaining peace is inescapably linked to inclusive development, resilience and human rights. The best ways to prevent conflicts continue to be democratic governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights, teamed with inclusive economic development. In that context, the proposed new European consensus on development puts forward a shared vision for development cooperation for the EU and its member States, aligned with the 2030 Agenda and designed to respond to current global challenges. It also aims to help build resilience among individuals, societies and States, and emphasizes our strong engagement with the countries most in need. We work in partnership with Governments in countries at risk of conflict and fragility and with external partners and civil society, as defined in the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. Peaceful and inclusive societies, good governance, the rule of law, independent judiciaries, reliable police forces and public sectors free of corruption are the best guarantees of sustainable peace and sustainable development. Sustaining peace requires that human rights and fundamental freedoms be respected, protected and fulfilled.

The implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement will be a crucial factor in reducing susceptibility to crises throughout the world. Much of that work will have to be tackled outside the Security Council. But the Council has a particular responsibility to address situations in danger of deteriorating, effectively and in a timely manner. Given the role foreseen for the Secretary-General by Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations in bringing issues to the attention of the Security Council, it is essential that the Council and the Secretariat cooperate smoothly and efficiently.

We must also develop more creative approaches to diplomacy, including by continuing to promote the role of women in peace efforts, for we need them to be at the forefront in creating and sustaining peace. In order to be prepared to respond in a timely and effective manner, the Council could explore new and innovative ways to work with other actors, including civil society. Existing tools such as Arria Formula meetings are very useful in that regard. Horizon-scanning briefings could be reinvigorated, and the Human Rights Up Front initiative, as an early warning tool, should be maintained and strengthened. We urge members of the Security Council not to vote against credible draft resolutions on timely and decisive action aimed at preventing or ending mass atrocities.

In conclusion, the Council should ensure that longer-term peacebuilding is considered in mission mandates, along with reflections on how to design transitions and strengthen the

advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission. What we need most is to translate what we know into action, so that the United Nations can deliver effectively on its core tasks in a coherent manner. A strong, effective United Nations is more essential than ever.