

**Ms. Jean** (*spoke in French*):

We were cruelly confronted by the news of the two attacks that took place in quick succession yesterday and the day before in Mali, which claimed the life of a French soldier in a mine explosion and that of a Togolese peacekeeper in an ambush that also injured seven other persons, three of them critically. We are gathered here aware of the ultimate sacrifice made by men and women deployed in the field in the service of peace. We here are driven by the same determination and urgency and the same ideal enshrined in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations Charter in 1945, namely,

“to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace”.

Through those words, the Security Council’s road map — our road map— can be more clearly traced.

I would like to commend you, Mr. President—Foreign Minister Mankeur Ndiaye — and your country, Senegal, which currently holds the presidency of the Security Council as well as the chairmanship of the Summit of La Francophonie, for taking the initiative to convene this high-level debate, which is so crucial for the conduct of peacekeeping operations in the face of what have been called unprecedented asymmetrical threats. This initiative also reflects Senegal’s very active role at the helm of the Council’s Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, and more generally its major, and appreciated, commitment to peacekeeping operations, including those deployed in francophone countries. I would also like, through you, Mr. President, to thank Senegal for the trust it places in the International Organization of La Francophonie (IOF), as reflected in its invitation for me to participate here today. This is a historic moment for us.

I am here today as the Secretary-General of La Francophonie, an international organization made up of 80 States and Governments from five continents. The francophone world today accounts for half of all United Nations peacekeeping operations throughout the

world. Fifty-five member States and observers of our organization are engaged in peacekeeping operations today — indicating that we too have recognized the urgent need to adapt peacekeeping operations in terms of their mandates and resources in the face of the new threats confronting them.

We in the IOF can see those threats every day: in Mali, Lebanon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, and even in the end- of- mandate operations in Côte d’Ivoire. The threats are permanent. They have an impact

both on peacekeepers and the mandate of peacekeeping operations as well as when it comes to protecting civilians and securing territory, boundaries and personnel.

We are shocked by recurrent attacks against peacekeepers in Mali, which we condemn in the strongest terms. And, as we know, bordering countries are not spared. We saw recently how the army of the Niger fell victim to an attack by criminal militias on 6 October, when 22 soldiers who were providing security at a site for Malian refugees in the Tahoua region, which borders Mali, were killed in broad daylight.

The President of the Niger, still in shock when I called him, did not fail to tell me what the subregion wanted, that is, that in carrying out its mandate, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) act more tactically and robustly and in a more concerted and coordinated manner with the affected countries in order to use force in the spirit of Article I of the Charter, which I mentioned earlier, so as to prevent and remove threats to the peace and to suppress all acts of aggression. As La Francophonie is always quick to recall, this is about our absolute responsibility to protect, by all means, populations exposed to danger.

We often find ourselves helpless in the face of the deadly attacks perpetrated by these criminal groups, which use every cruel and cowardly means to destabilize already weak countries. To defeat these criminal groups, whose goal is to control routes and passages so as to facilitate trafficking in drugs, arms and human beings, we must foil their plans and counter their actions by means of more collective and thus more effective efforts. We can do this only if we work together in the context of a joint effort that involves the international community together with the States concerned and those of the subregion. We need also to strengthen the capacity of said States to act and fully participate in defending their territory and protecting their peoples.

I have repeatedly conveyed to the international community, and to the Security Council in particular, the pressing appeals of the countries in the Lake Chad Basin region for additional resources, in the form of technical and logistical support, for the Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight to put an end to the deadly attacks by Boko Haram against isolated, extremely vulnerable communities. Yes, efforts have been made, and I wish to commend them. Here I am thinking in particular of the more modern, sophisticated equipment provided to the troops; the priority given to intelligence-gathering; and the strengthening in recent months of the mandate of certain operations, including MINUSMA, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, so that they can better protect civilians and withstand the attacks of armed groups. But we see also how difficult it has been to implement resolution 2295 (2016).

All of these difficulties and shortcomings, and sometimes even dysfunctions, of which we are fully aware, are a source of serious concern for the IOF, because for 20 years we have been actively and concretely cooperating with our international partners, primarily the United Nations, in crisis prevention and conflict prevention and resolution, and supporting countries as they seek to consolidate peace and democracy. The French-speaking space has become a kind of laboratory for peacekeeping operations. Given our presence on the ground at all stages of the continuum of peace, our widely acknowledged experience and expertise in fragile political, security and socioeconomic contexts, we welcome the high priority given to crisis prevention and peacebuilding in the framework of the global peacekeeping reform undertaken by the United Nations in 2015.

It is in that same spirit that we call for the continuation, and even the strengthening, of the civilian dimension of peacekeeping operations, which represents a pivotal element of stabilization in countries emerging from crisis and in transition situations. This is part and parcel of the preventive approaches promoted by the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

I believe that we are all on the same page. A security approach is necessary but not sufficient. As I said at the international conference convened by the IOF in June on countering terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism, we must also respond to the determined attacks against us with our own determination to strike back, using all of our weapons of mass construction: education, training for all, job creation and investment in economic initiatives for women and for youth, so as to bring about sustainable, equitable development. We also have to create a deep-rooted culture of democracy and peace and strengthen rule-of-law institutions as well as respect for rights and freedoms.

Ensuring such freedoms is a joint endeavour. I wish to stress also the importance of respecting freedom of speech and freedom of the press, which are key to a climate of peace. I have just been informed by the highest authorities of Radio France Internationale of the jamming of its FM signal as well as that of Radio Okapi, the United Nations radio station in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is just one example. Such incidents are worrisome and must be avoided so as to preserve freedom of the press and of speech. The IOF's approach to its work in all the areas I have just mentioned involves shared responsibility.

Turning to the security dimension, we support unreservedly the Council's desire to make peacekeeping operations safer and more robust and increase their level of performance. On the basis of the conclusions of the June IOF conference, to which my dear friend Mr. Jean-Paul Laborde made a valuable contribution, I wish also to underscore the need to strengthen cooperation in terms of intelligence-gathering, because it is clear that while peacekeeping operations cannot be anti-terrorist actors as they currently stand, they can

and must be provided the resources to better face the new threats they face and contribute, at various levels, to minimizing them.

To that end, Blue Helmets must be better equipped, better prepared and better trained, and the IOF is contributing to that endeavour. Our experience in the French-speaking world has shown us that it is vital that personnel deployed on the ground be able to gather information, hear witness statements and communicate in French with the local authorities and population. They must also have a solid grasp of the historical, political, socioeconomic and cultural realities. The operations' security and ability to perform are at stake, in particular as concerns the civilian dimension. This is

16-36375

**5/77**

**S/PV.7802 Maintenance of international peace and security 07/11/2016**

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particularly important at a time when terrorist strategies are based on the capacity of these criminal groups to infiltrate and melt into local populations. Also at stake is dialogue and the climate of confidence that must be established. Let us not underestimate this dimension.

I reiterate here the call I made at the Paris ministerial conference on peacekeeping operations in French-speaking environments a few days ago: that every effort must be made to strengthen the use of French within the Secretariat and in theatres of operation in French-speaking countries. We therefore call for greater participation by the States members of the IOF and for the greater recruitment of French-speaking personnel in peacekeeping operations. We also support a greater expansion of United Nations recruitment activities to French-speaking populations. Here I would pay tribute to Mr. Atul Khare and Mr. Hervé Ladsous for the very close cooperation that the IOF has been enjoying with the Department of Field Support and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which has allowed us to achieve encouraging results. For example, 99 per cent of MINUSCA police are French-speaking.

A great deal needs to be done. That is why we have developed a French teaching method for non-French-speaking defence and security forces, in cooperation with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Experience has shown also that in certain Member States it is vital to better train and prepare deployed personnel and Blue Helmets so as to enable them to more effectively address the new threats facing them. That is why we regularly support francophone training centres for peacekeeping operations. That is also why, as my dear colleague Hervé Ladsous is well aware, we have a network of French-speaking

military, police and civilian capacities through our Francophone Expertise and Training Network for Peace Operations, which acts as the umbrella organization for francophone training centres and provides information, in French, on peacekeeping, mobilizing for that purpose a sizeable community of experts.

Experience has shown that it is vital to increase security in the environments in which peacekeeping operations are deployed. That is the goal of the assistance we provide to our member States to help them build their capacity to fight terrorism, as Mr. Jean-Paul Laborde well knows, given that the IOF is cooperating with the Counter-Terrorism Committee to promote the ratification by national Governments of universal, regional and subregional instruments to

counter terrorism and crime. We are also strengthening the capacities of specialized francophone judges and prosecutors.

All the crises, conflicts and new threats that we have to face, wherever they are, concern all of us without exception, and call for a concerted and coordinated approach on our part for which we pool our capacities, experience, resources and means, whether that is in the context of our cooperation with the United Nations, our bilateral, multilateral, regional or subregional cooperation, or our cooperation with institutional stakeholders and civil society. The Council should rest assured that the OIF will continue to promote that essential integrated approach with all its partners, including the United Nations, and that it can and should count on us.