

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan expresses its appreciation to the presidency of China for convening this debate, as well as to Secretary-General António Guterres and the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Ambassador Smail Chergui, for their thoughtful and insightful briefings on enhancing African capacities in the areas of peace and security.

The first United Nations-African Union annual conference, which was held on 19 April and resulted in the Joint Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, marks a new phase of enhanced strategic partnership between the two organizations. We need to maintain that momentum with a view to accelerating and increasing its operationalization and implementation. My delegation therefore would like to make the following observations.

First, we should prioritize conflict prevention and mediation by improving the efficiency of the United Nations-African Union preventive diplomacy with more coordinated actions, early warning, rapid response and what the Secretary-General calls a whole new approach that shifts our focus to preventing conflicts rather than the current trend of spending more time and resources resolving them. That characterized the Secretary-General's new agenda for peace, which also strives to fast forward the Agenda 2063, including the Silence the Guns by 2020 project.

Secondly, our response to crises remains fragmented despite the fact that the causes of crises are deeply interlinked. Therefore, it is necessary to elaborate a comprehensive approach that connects security, humanitarian and development efforts, all with a greater emphasis and additional financial outlays on peacebuilding measures. Currently, we spend more than \$7 billion on peacekeeping and less than \$1 billion on laying the foundations for long-term sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of tensions and instability. Therefore, we must invest more in sustainable development, building State institutions and consolidating constitutions, democracy-building, rule of law, good governance and security sector reforms.

Equally important are investments in human development, including education, health, job creation, employment and social services. We must simultaneously boost infrastructure development in order to foster trade and agriculture, as well as water, food and energy security. Kazakhstan has invested in the problems of technical assistance and capacity-building through the Ministries for Foreign Affairs of 45 African States. Looking to the future, we intend to stay engaged in that sphere. It is critical to focus on climate mitigation, disaster-risk reduction and building resilience, because only that will promote intra-African economic growth and result in greater and more vibrant regional integration and progress. Implementing the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, which features a dual track of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, is a good model for achieving stability and development in other conflict zones. It is also important

to ensure that women and youth are fully integrated into all activities at every stage related to peace and security. It is also important that they are at the negotiating table at the highest levels.

Thirdly, the United Nations should be encouraged to leverage the comparative advantages of regional and subregional organizations, as well as groups of neighbouring countries, which possess a better understanding of the dynamics and root causes of conflicts, and mobilize respective local resources. The AU's peace operations have proven to be very effective owing to the familiarity of African soldiers with their own terrain and local conditions, as well as the tactics of armed groups. Good examples of that are the work of the AU-United Nations hybrid missions and the creation of regional forces, such as the Multinational Joint Task Force, which was able to effectively combat Boko Haram, as well as the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force.

Likewise, Africa should be part of our global counter-terrorism multilateral action. However, that means that the mandates of our multidimensional hybrid missions must be realistic and achievable. At the same time, they must address asymmetrical conflicts with ongoing monitoring and evaluation. That calls for sufficient financial and capacity-building support to AU. Otherwise, the ability to deliver will not match the expected aspirations. The United Nations and the international community should provide equipment, resources, technical support and training and establish sustainable and predictable financing mechanisms for AU peace operations, in accordance with resolution 2320 (2016). The various options for a jointly developed budget, as identified in the Secretary-General's report of 26 May (S/2017/454), should be explored for optimal results. We also believe that the Peace Fund will be a robust mechanism for cooperation and partnership. We look forward to discussing the matter further during our planned visit to Addis Ababa in September for the annual consultations with the AU Peace and Security Council.

As an observer to the African Union, Kazakhstan remains committed to further strengthening the capacity of the AU and to helping African countries fulfil their vision for peace, progress and prosperity. We need to invest now because as Africa develops, it will shape global events in the future. It is already recognized to be the driver of the world economy in the twenty-first century.