

**Mr. Suárez Moreno (Venezuela) (spoke in Spanish):** It is an honour for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to take the floor to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

At the outset, on behalf of the member States of the Movement, I extend our best wishes to the delegation of the People's Republic of China in presiding over a successful month in the work of the Security Council. I would also like to express our appreciation for China's efforts in preparing the concept note (S/2017/574, annex) for this session, which serves as the basis for guiding our discussions today. We would also like to acknowledge the diligence with which the delegation of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, under the leadership of Ambassador Sacha Llorentty Solíz, led the work of this organ during the month of June. Similarly, we would like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, and the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Mr. Smail Chergui, for their briefings.

As rightly pointed out in the concept note for this open debate, Africa is the continent with the greatest development potential. Nonetheless, that potential could certainly be lost owing to various security and developmental challenges faced by this vibrant continent, including, among others, protracted conflicts, climate change and transnational organized crime. In that regard, it is worth noting that, during the seventeenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in September 2016 on the Island of Margarita in Venezuela, the NAM Heads of State and Government reiterated their determination to build a peaceful and prosperous world by collectively addressing existing, new and emerging challenges and issues of shared concern to its member States, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles of international law.

As we well know, there can be no peace without development and no development without peace, bearing in mind how deeply those two processes are interconnected. It is for that reason that the Movement appreciates the convening of this open debate, aimed at emphasizing the importance of assisting Africa in enhancing its capacities in the areas of peace and security. In that regard, the Non-Aligned Movement underscores the important role that regional and subregional bodies and mechanisms can play in the promotion of regional peace and security and in economic and social development by fostering cooperation among countries in the region. We also emphasize the importance of synergy between regional and subregional initiatives to ensure complementarity and the added value of each process in achieving their common goals, such as political stability, economic growth, and social and cultural development.

The member States of the Non-Aligned Movement welcome the determination of the United Nations to enhance its relationship and cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, in particular with the African Union, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. We also welcome the stated support for

the implementation of the 2063 Agenda, adopted during the twenty-fourth ordinary session of the Heads of State and Government of the Assembly of the African Union, held from 30 to 31 January 2015 in Addis Ababa, in order to promote peace, stability and socioeconomic development in Africa.

The Security Council has in the past committed itself to strengthening cooperation and coordination with the African Union. Efforts must therefore be redoubled to further strengthen the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union at the operational, political and tactical levels, with a view to addressing in a holistic manner the challenges faced in the fields of peace and security, including the need to address the root causes of conflicts and to promote stability and development. At the same time, we must bear in mind that the African Union enjoys acknowledged political authority in the region, as well as the premise of African solutions to African problems and the African Union's proven experience in assisting in the peaceful settlement of disputes through political dialogue and consultations, thereby contributing to lasting peace.

While recognizing the important role that youth and women can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, we would like to underscore, inter alia, the African Youth (2009-2018) Decade Plan of Action as a framework for multisectorial and multidimensional engagement by all stakeholders towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the African Youth Charter, including those of governance, peace and security, as well as the African Peace and Security Architecture Roadmap 2016-2020, including its initiative entitled "Silencing the Guns, Owning the Future: Realizing a Conflict-Free Africa by 2020".

Moreover, the Movement supports ongoing efforts to strengthen African peacekeeping capabilities and emphasizes the importance of implementing the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, which was signed on 19 April, in the short, medium and long terms in all relevant areas. The Non-Aligned Movement also recommends enhancing an effective partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in order to improve the planning, deployment and management of African peacekeeping operations. In that regard, we stress the importance of finding ways to secure predictable, adequate and sustained financial support to African Union-led peace operations so that deployed missions can maximize their operational effectiveness on the ground.

In conclusion, it is worth recalling that, in 2004, former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated in an interview that

"[t]here is a greater fatigue concerning the African problem today than five or 10 years ago. The situation now in Africa is worse than it was 10 years ago".

Today, 13 years later, his assessment continues to hold true. Therefore, the Non-Aligned Movement encourages the international community to resolutely support efforts in favour of peace, stability and socioeconomic development in Africa, including capacity-building in those areas.

