

**Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh):** Bangladesh thanks the Chinese presidency for organizing this open debate. We also thank the Secretary-General and the African Union (AU) Commissioner for their shared vision for enhancing African capacities for peace and security.

Bangladesh values its association with Africa and cherishes a number of instances in which its engagement has played an instrumental role in achieving sustainable peace on the ground. In our role as spokesperson for the least developed countries, we have consistently advocated for the particular needs and challenges of the countries affected by, or emerging from, conflicts in Africa. Bangladesh therefore feels encouraged to see the AU assuming enhanced responsibility and ownership so as to prevent conflicts and promote durable peace in the region. In the spirit of finding African solutions to African problems, we appreciate the important strides made by the AU-led peace support operations in Somalia, the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel region in particular. Bangladesh continues to express its readiness to further cooperate with the AU, preferably through the United Nations and in full respect of the AU's ownership of its mandated operations.

The joint AU-United Nations review authorized by the Council identified a range of opportunities and outstanding challenges inherent in the strategic partnership that has evolved over the past 15 years. The adoption of resolution 2320 (2016), the AU's decisions and overtures concerning its Peace Fund and the signing of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security provide a broader context for further broadening and deepening that partnership. The African Union's sustained initiatives to live up to its commitment to fund 25 per cent of the cost of its peace support activities have added further momentum to consolidating the partnership, including through flexible yet sustainable financing modalities.

With regard to the Secretary-General's comprehensive report (S/2017/454), my delegation wishes to underline five general points.

First, we stress the importance of improving capacities for joint appraisal, assessment and analysis of conflicts by the United Nations and the AU, including in the context of the Secretary-General's peace and security architecture reform initiative. It remains critical that such joint assessment and analysis be conducted in an objective, consultative and inclusive manner.

Secondly, in view of the challenges of obtaining financing through assessed contributions by United Nations States Members, flexibility and diversity with regard to the various options presented by the Secretary-General in his report could help address the prevailing financing gaps and the uncertainty surrounding the trust-fund model based on voluntary contributions. It would be advisable to exercise caution with regard to financing models that have not been sufficiently tested.

Thirdly, in terms of mission support, we recognize the importance of harnessing the respective comparative advantages of the United Nations and the AU in a flexible, case-by-case manner. The experience of the United Nations support offices to the African Union Mission in Somalia and of the Organization in Somalia provides a useful template that could be further strengthened and improvised, with the aim of avoiding duplication and ensuring compliance and oversight.

Fourthly, the notion of doctrinal flexibility, especially with regard to peace enforcement and counter-terrorism, needs to be invoked on the basis of the African Union's ownership and decisions in that regard. We reiterate that the support for African peace support operations should not stretch the mandate and competence of United Nations peacekeeping and support missions or endanger the safety and security of its civilian and non-civilian personnel.

Fifthly, and lastly, we reaffirm the overriding priority of seeking political solutions to conflicts in Africa and elsewhere as a critical precondition for sustaining peace across the continuum of conflicts. The importance of involving women and youth in peace processes, including in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, remains paramount in the interest of enhancing inclusive national ownership.

Bangladesh appreciates the forward-looking thrust in further strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the AU in the areas of peace and security, and wishes to see further concrete decisions by the Council later this year, while upholding the spirit of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.