

Mr. Sobral Duarte (Brazil): Regional and subregional organizations in Africa are increasingly contributing to complement the work of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security on the African continent, pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Among the organizations on the continent, the African Union (AU) is the most representative, with 54 members, as well as one of the oldest. The AU is also one of the regional organizations with which the United Nations maintains the most diversified and frequent contacts and cooperation.

Since 2002, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) has been developing a platform for the prevention, management and resolution of crises and conflicts, as well as for post-conflict reconstruction and development. The APSA road map

for the period 2016-2020, launched in April, provides a renewed strategic direction for the promotion of peace and security in Africa. Over the past 10 years, we have witnessed important institutional advances that have set the stage for enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the AU.

The three recent reviews on peacekeeping operations, on the peacebuilding architecture and on women and peace and security provided us with a singular opportunity to discuss peace and security in Africa. In that regard, allow me to highlight the adoption, on 27 April, of the landmark General Assembly resolution 70/262 and resolution 2282 (2016), on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. Those three reviews on peace and security emphasized prevention and the political solution of conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy. In that regard, we underline that prevention must not only be carried out with full respect for international law and international humanitarian law, but must also give due consideration to the views of the leadership and the organizations of a given region.

Let me refer to two past cases in Africa, where if a prevention-oriented approach had been adopted, results could have been different: the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the military intervention in Libya in 2011. In Rwanda, early warnings were given on several occasions, including by the then Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, Roméo Dallaire, but those fell on deaf ears. The error was therefore one of omission. In the case of Libya, had the ad hoc working group, created by the African Union and composed of five Heads of State, been given the political space to engage in finding a way forward, perhaps an ill-fated intervention could have been avoided and the Sahel region would be more stable today.

In discussing the United Nations-AU partnership, one should not avoid the question of adequate means for the implementation of increasingly complex tasks. Peacekeeping mandates must be accompanied by the necessary resources. By the same token, regional

actors should spare no effort to progressively bring their troops up to United Nations standards of performance. According to the report of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, chaired by former President of South Africa Thabo Mbeki, it is estimated that Africa has lost \$1 trillion over the past five decades owing to illicit financial flows — a concept that includes criminal activities, such as tax evasion, smuggling, bribery and corruption. That sum is equivalent to nearly all the official development assistance received by Africa during that time. According to the same report, illicit financial flows in Africa are increasing and now amount to \$50 billion a year.

As one of its main recommendations, the Panel called for the African Union to elaborate a global governance framework to determine the conditions under which assets are frozen, managed and repatriated. That could present an opportunity to discuss the idea of using part of those resources to predictably fund peace and security efforts, including peacebuilding on the African continent. Let the Council bear in mind that the last approved annual budget of the United Nations for all peacekeeping operations was \$8.27 billion dollars, which is only 16.5 per cent of what Africa loses annually through illicit financial outflows. We should also consider the challenges posed by the illegal exploitation of natural resources that not only fuels conflict, including by financing armed groups, but also has a devastating impact on sustainable development.

Again, from a perspective of enhancing prevention, a more active role should be given to the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) regarding cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, on the one hand, and between the PBC and the Security Council, on the other. Today, all six countries on the agenda of the PBC are in Africa. The diversified membership of the Commission, currently chaired by Kenya, allows for discussions with a broad range of views.

Allow me finally to refer to a crisis that has remained without a satisfactory solution after two decades and would greatly benefit from a prevention-centred and holistic approach to conflict, as well as from enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. In 2007, a study by the International Rescue Committee concluded that the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had directly or indirectly claimed the lives of 5.4 million people. Although the exact figure remains a matter of debate, that conflict must be placed among the great human cataclysms of our time. As one scholar on the Democratic Republic of the Congo has written, “The mortality figures are so immense that they become absurd, almost meaningless”. Today, almost one decade after that study, the country continues to face enormous challenges. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, there are 7.5 million people in need of humanitarian help and protection. That is 9 per cent of the population.

Conflicts could have been avoided if we had focused more on prevention. Strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the AU and taking full advantage of the African Peace and Security Architecture are indispensable steps. Developing a better understanding of how illicit financial flows impact areas subject to conflict is also essential. Africa is a continent of great human and natural wealth. Africans from all parts of the continent have demonstrated leadership and pragmatism, as well as the ability to inspire and innovate, from Nelson Mandela to Kofi Annan.

Brazil will continue to work closely with African countries within the multilateral and regional structures at our disposal in the promotion of peace and development, drawing upon our fraternal bonds.