

Mr. Vieira (Brazil):

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and the Swedish presidency of the Security Council for having organized this debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. I should like also to welcome the Secretary-General, António Guterres, as this is the first time he is participating in a Security Council debate in that capacity, and to commend him for the leadership he has shown since

his first day in office and the drive to reform and adapt the Organization to the demands of the twenty-first century.

This open debate is timely and takes place at a moment of transition in the United Nations. Brazil would like to echo the new Secretary-General's appeal for all of us to put peace first in this new year. To that end, prevention must come first, and calls to prevent conflict and sustain peace must be translated into concrete deeds.

As conflicts multiply and become more complex, the major weakness of the United Nations remains its inability to prevent conflicts. The best way to protect civilians, who are the main victims, is to focus primarily on prevention. Secretary-General Guterres accurately remarked that the United Nations was born from war and that we must now focus on peace. Not long ago, the United Nations went through a process of reviewing its activity with a view to adapting the Organization to the challenges faced regarding the maintenance of international peace and security. The recommendations contained in the three resulting reports hinged on one common element: the primacy of politics.

These documents highlight the fact that United Nations engagement needs to adopt a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace that should also focus on conflict prevention. I wish to underscore in particular the findings of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, which paved the way for the notion of sustaining peace. This concept, enshrined in General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, encompasses the dimension of conflict prevention and marks an evolution in relation to the original paradigm of peacebuilding, which focused exclusively on countries emerging from conflict.

It has long been the Brazilian view that the United Nations engagement to promote peace and security should go beyond addressing the immediate causes and drivers of conflict, sending peacekeeping operations and providing aid relief. Strategies to sustain peace must also focus on the structural prevention of the outbreak of, or relapse into, conflict, including by fighting poverty, ensuring youth employment and gender equality, promoting socioeconomic development, building full-fledged institutions, and promoting national reconciliation, improved governance and more inclusive societies. These actions

should be carried out in close coordination with national authorities and taking into account the priorities established and the need for national ownership at all stages. Without falling into the trap of securitizing development, enhanced coordination between the United Nations development system and the architecture to sustain peace should be pursued.

As for the steps to be taken to ensure more effective, complete prevention by the Security Council and across the wider United Nations system, Brazil is of the view that better coordination and cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission is needed. As we have stated on various occasions, Security Council members must take full advantage of the role of the Peacebuilding Commission and contribute to an improved United Nations engagement. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of the review of the working methods of the Peacebuilding Commission, which calls for enhanced cooperation between these two bodies. The revised working methods foresee that in preparation for briefings of the Security Council, the Commission may consider visits to the fields, including, when invited by the Council, joint visits with the Security Council. It is our opinion that the Council would benefit from the long-term perspective of the Commission in those joint visits. Peacekeeping operations and special political missions should also adopt the long-term perspective required for sustaining peace.

On a more operational level, the Council could do more to prioritize prevention in its activities. Regular horizon-scanning exercises focused on potential hotspots and cross-cutting thematic concerns should be resumed. This can certainly be done in a way that helps to stave off conflict rather than stoke tensions. As for how to increase the focus on prevention, the incoming Secretary-General has rightly outlined the measures needed: address the root causes through a balanced approach to the three pillars of the United Nations. Such an endeavour will require enhanced coordination between the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General will also have an important role in preparing the report to be presented to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session on options to increase, restructure and better prioritize funding allocated to peacebuilding activities, including through assessed contributions. That should also be considered as we strive to strengthen special political missions, which have been doing important work to prevent and mediate conflict and to sustain peace, but lack the predictable and sizable financial support of peacekeeping operations.

In his New Year address, the Secretary-General rightly underscored that trillions of dollars are spent on waging war. Allow me to add that billions are also spent in peacebuilding operations worldwide. Resources should be more efficiently invested in

strengthening the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and special political missions, which can play an invaluable role in prevention. As Ambassador Gert Rosenthal underscored in the report (see S/2015/490) of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, peacebuilding is an inherently political process. The Security Council and the General Assembly have already shown political will by agreeing on a framework for peace. We need a strategic plan for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016). I hope that the high-level event entitled “Building Sustainable Peace for All: Synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace”, to be held on 24 January, will afford us an opportunity to demonstrate the renewed commitment of Member States, the United Nations and other stakeholders to building lasting peace.