

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia):

I would like to join previous speakers in welcoming the Swedish presidency and in thanking Foreign Minister Wallström for setting a very ambitious agenda from the start and for this particular debate, which promotes reflection on the vision of the Secretary-General.

My country would like to align itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union, and in my national capacity, I would like to make the following statement.

We welcome the Secretary-General's first priority, namely, to promote a surge in diplomacy for peace in order to resolve ongoing conflicts and prevent others from erupting. A holistic vision and strategic decisions on the part of the new leadership are critical in order to counter the static stance that the United Nations has taken on early action, along with its frequent failures to prevent or resolve conflicts, as we saw in Syria, Ukraine, Georgia and other places.

Georgia welcomes the effort to build a new political consensus in support of maintaining peace and security worldwide by preventing conflicts before they occur, which is in line with the concept of sustaining peace and which underlines the imperative of addressing all stages of the conflict cycle. Georgia shares the view of many on the importance of early action and proactive work on the part of United Nations entities, both at Headquarters and in the field, across the main pillars of the United Nations system, to identify early warning signs and address the risks confronting peace. Let me recall the pledges and commitments undertaken by Member States at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 with a view of preventing conflicts and stress, where we agreed that sustaining peace can only be achieved through joint determination and adherence to the principles of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

We view peace prospects as directly linked to advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the international community's continuous focus on strengthening human rights. As a strong supporter of greater involvement by women in preventing conflicts, we also place particular emphasis on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Noting that the Security Council has a unique responsibility in the area of peace and security and conflict prevention, Georgia has had its own sad experience, from which we should all learn valuable lessons about what happens when a permanent member of the Security Council, a party to the conflict, singlehandedly vetoes the presence of an United Nations observer mission as an international monitoring mechanism. That can take place right after a full-scale war, at a time when the international security presence should be

increased, as was the case with the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia in 2009. Since then, both Georgia and the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are under illegal military occupation by the Russian Federation, continue to be completely closed off from international monitoring mechanisms. Following several waves of ethnic cleansing, hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced, and, in the absence of international monitoring mechanisms, the humanitarian situation in the occupied regions remains critical. People are deprived of their basic human rights and freedoms, including, but not limited to, the freedom of movement. Given that experience, Georgia believes that the veto right should be restricted so as to prevent its misuse.

When a permanent member is involved in a conflict under consideration by the Security Council, it cannot exercise its veto right impartially. That is the only way that we can prevent mass violations of human rights and further escalation of conflict. In the same vein, Georgia has also endorsed the joint French-Mexican proposal regarding the use of the veto in the Security Council, as well as the initiative introduced by Liechtenstein on a code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Those concepts have been presented to the Council, and now it would be expedient, in our view, to develop the relevant procedural rules to accomplish those goals.