

Mr. Salam (Lebanon):

The idea of preventive diplomacy is rooted, as we all know, in the purposes and principles of the United Nations, which are defined in its Charter, in particular in Article 1, paragraph 1, “[t]o maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace”.

That has inspired successive Secretaries-General, from Dag Hammarskjöld — your fellow citizen, Madam President — to Boutros Boutros Ghali and our current Secretary-General, to move the United Nations “from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention”, as is often said. It has also been the central piece of many debates in the Security Council, including the one organized by Lebanon in September 2011 (see S/PV.6621), to which my country, as President, submitted a concept paper entitled “Strengthening and consolidating preventive diplomacy” (S/2011/570, annex). That concept has been reinvigorated in three global policy reviews and many reports and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. Suffice it to mention here the preamble to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goal 16.

Yet at the beginning of 2017, our world continues to face a multitude of challenges: from occupation and protracted conflicts to large movements of refugees and migrants to extreme violence, terrorism, violation of human rights and crises in global governance. Today’s debate on the topic “Conflict prevention and sustaining peace” should be an opportunity to sharpen the existing tools on prevention and to restore our faith in multilateralism’s ability to push forward the agenda for peace and its sustainability.

In an attempt to answer the questions raised in Sweden’s concept note (S/2017/6, annex) framing the debate, allow me to highlight the following points.

The United Nations currently has at its disposal a significant array of assets in the field of conflict prevention, including the Secretary-General’s good offices, envoys, resident political missions, United Nations country teams, situation briefings, the Mediation Support Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, regional offices, peacekeeping operations, groups of friends and their diplomatic support, fact-

finding missions, inquiries and investigations. We look to the Secretary-General for a reinvigorated approach to strengthening those assets and streamlining their roles. Close cooperation between the Council and an effective and efficient Secretariat is pivotal in our preventive endeavours. Moreover, partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, youth, women, civil society and academia will improve our early-warning systems’ ability to identify the source of tension, to address it and to consolidate the national, regional and international support needed to support peaceful and developmental processes built on respect for human rights.

We, the Member States, should remain committed to achieving the reform of the United Nations, which will strengthen its ability to fulfil its mandate in our increasingly interconnected world with its new threats to peace and security. While wishing to respect the mandates of the various organs, we can see that the nature of those challenges requires an integrated approach within the United Nations. It is imperative to build upon the preventive initiatives taken by other agencies, such as UNESCO in the field of education and the United Nations Development Programme in the area of good governance, democratic processes and elections, just to name a few.

My region, the Middle East, is a clear example of the importance of placing the need to address the root causes of conflicts at the top of our agenda. Moreover, in the context of conflict prevention, I remind the Council of Lebanon's initiative in 2016, namely, to seek, based on the Charter of the United Nations and paragraph 10 of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), the good offices of the Secretary-General in the demarcation of the disputed maritime border of the exclusive economic zones between Lebanon and Israel, emphasizing that the non-resolution of that issue will remain a source of conflict that threatens the peace and security of our region.

Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, which entrusts the Secretary-General with the authority to

“bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security”,

should always be considered in the context of shared responsibility in the maintenance of peace and security. Regular briefings, frank reviews of situations and open debates, just like the one we are having today, will pave the way towards the collective ownership of conflict prevention and sustaining peace.