

Mr. Sparsler (Liechtenstein):

Liechtenstein thanks the Swedish presidency, and in particular Foreign Minister Wallström, for this Security Council open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. After a year of overwhelming conflict-induced human suffering, a discussion on how to strengthen preventive action in the United Nations is indeed timely and pertinent, not least in the light of the Security Council's difficulties in finding appropriate responses to many of the predominant crises of our time. We also warmly welcome the Secretary-General at his first official appearance in the Council and thank him for outlining his vision for a renewed emphasis on prevention, as well as his commitment to stronger diplomacy for peace. A close and well-functioning working relationship between the Secretary-General and the Security Council will be a crucial element in that regard.

Liechtenstein welcomes the shift initiated by General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) towards a more comprehensive approach to sustaining peace that spans the entire conflict cycle — from early warning and action to reconciliation, reconstruction and development — and flows through all three pillars of

the United Nations, including development and human rights. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflects such a comprehensive approach, in particular in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16. If thoroughly implemented, the SDGs can be a powerful prevention tool, and the same holds for the United Nations body of human rights obligations. At the same time, substantial gaps in the implementation of sustainable development commitments and consistent violations of human rights obligations are important early warning signs that can constitute the basis of a decision by the United Nations to take early and preventive action.

The Security Council and the General Assembly have both committed to a comprehensive approach to transitional justice when reviewing the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. Transitional justice is an important prerequisite for consolidating peace and preventing conflicts, and it decreases the likelihood that post-conflict societies relapse into conflict. Research on transitional justice has turned attention to the possibility of using transitional justice while a conflict is ongoing in an attempt to resolve disputes and grievances sooner, thereby bringing the conflict to an end more quickly. That is one of many reasons that Liechtenstein initiated General Assembly resolution 71/248. It was in order to establish an international, impartial and independent mechanism that will collect and preserve evidence of the most serious crimes committed in Syria since March 2011. In addition to contributing to justice, the mechanism will also have a deterrent effect.

Deterrence is a key preventive tool and one of the main achievements of the International Criminal Court (ICC) when it comes to preventing mass atrocities. As the international

judicial institution promoting accountability and an end to impunity, the ICC directly contributes to preventing the commission of future atrocity crimes. It is also an important global institution in the context of resolution 1325 (2000) for its pioneering work on gender justice. By recognizing a range of sexual and gender-based crimes experienced by women in conflict, the ICC also acts to deter the commission of such crimes in the future.

Membership in the Security Council is a privilege that entails the responsibility to take action when confronted with mass atrocity crimes in conflict situations. The code of conduct on Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, as elaborated by the Accountability, Coherence, Transparency Group, is an expression of the commitment that Council members will take timely and decisive action aimed at preventing or ending said crimes. The code of conduct is also a pledge not to vote against a credible draft resolution before the Security Council that is aimed at ending or preventing the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. Recent experience in the Council shows that, unfortunately, we are still far from realizing that vision. One hundred and twelve Member States have signed the code, among them a majority of Council members. Those 112 States expect the code to be applied in practice, including on the basis of information provided by the Secretary-General. We therefore encourage the implementation of the code in the Council and call on all the remaining Member States, especially Council members and those aspiring to become members, to join the code of conduct.