

**Mr. Laassel** (Morocco) (*spoke in French*):

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the accession of the Kingdom of Sweden to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January, and I thank you for organizing this open debate and for choosing its theme. Issues pertaining to conflict prevention and sustaining peace are currently enjoying a very positive momentum, and we should, all together, take advantage of that in order to give concrete follow-up to your call for political and financial re-engagement on those priorities.

I also congratulate the Secretary-General on his briefing, which confirms his firm commitment to conflict prevention and sustaining peace. I would like to say to the Secretary-General and to the members of the Security Council that Morocco continues to be committed to the universal values of peaceful conflict resolution and sustaining peace.

The multiplication of conflicts, their complexity and their disastrous consequences make it necessary to review the way in which the Organization deals with them. This debate also provides us today an opportunity to present new approaches and answers to the questions that remain for the implementation of the vision initiated two years ago by the processes to review the peace and security architecture, which resulted in the emergence of the new paradigm, namely, sustaining peace.

The resolution on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (resolution 2282 (2016)) led to a redefinition of sustainable peace through a more integrated, strategic and coherent approach, in which security, development and human rights are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing. A comprehensive approach recognizes that sustaining peace is based, first, on conflict prevention and the elimination of its root causes by promoting sustained economic growth, lasting social development, strengthened social cohesion, the culture of democracy and human rights. Conflict prevention then becomes one of the strongest links in this new mechanism, namely, sustaining peace.

Often, the instruments available to the Secretary-General and to the Security Council set out in Chapter VI in the Charter of the United Nations, such as negotiation, mediation or arbitration, are not enough to avoid conflicts. As a result, traditional policies for preventing armed conflicts that seek only to reduce the intensity, duration and geographical extent of violence and, ultimately, to end it, have become inadequate.

The fact is that the underlying causes of conflicts often go neglected in the face of the urgency of ensuring a security and humanitarian response. But when strong institutions, the rule of law, and sufficient State capacity for minimum public services are lacking, conflicts, or relapses into conflict, are more likely to emerge. That is where we need a holistic vision and where the new concept of sustaining peace takes on its full meaning.

According to this innovative approach, the strategy that enables a coherent, effective and legitimate culture of prevention to establish itself is one that tackles every aspect of the root causes of conflicts.

There are many stakeholders with an important role in addressing the root causes of conflict, including bilateral and multilateral partners and non-governmental organizations, as well as representatives of civil society, young people and women. Within the United Nations system, the various funds and programmes

play a leading part in strengthening States' institutional capacities, as do regional and financial organizations.

Beyond that, several elements are required to implement the concept of sustaining peace, among them a change in the culture within the United Nations. We commend the Secretary-General on the steps he has already taken to reorganize various departments, and we believe firmly that they will help to revitalize prevention activities and improve the flow of information. This situation makes the role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) crucial in functioning as a bridge between all the various actors. In accordance with the latest resolutions of the Security Council (resolution 2282 (2016)) and the General Assembly (resolution 70/262)) on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, the time has come to strengthen the PBC so that it can play its role to the full.

In conclusion, I would like to share two recommendations. First, some Member States see prevention activities as an attack on their countries' sovereignty or as interference in their States' internal affairs. To remedy that, we should clarify the principles of early warning and preventive action. A few years ago, the same misunderstanding afflicted the concept of the protection of civilians, and yet today it has become a sacred principle. Secondly, in order to ensure the success of sustaining peace, we should pay special attention to an operation's transition from peacekeeping to country team. Based on current experiences in Liberia, as well as in Mali and the Central African Republic, we could consider including support for country teams in the compulsory contribution funds while the missions are still deployed, in order to prepare for the transition as soon as that deployment begins.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate the new members of the Council — your country, Mr. President, as well as Bolivia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Italy — on their election, and to assure them of our full cooperation. Similarly, I offer my congratulations on the end of the Council term of the last remaining dictatorship in Latin America, Venezuela. That country has perverted the Council's mandate with a political and ideological agenda and an utter lack of interest in just causes, particularly in Africa and the Middle East. It is a self-proclaimed teacher of lessons about human rights when its own people live under

oppression, torture, forced disappearances and imprisonment. Venezuela's representative talks of referendums when his own Government has refused its own people a referendum and prevents them from expressing their views democratically. The presence of such a representative, of such a country, in the Security Council tarnishes its image and weakens the Organization. Happily, it is gone. I am sorry for having digressed from my statement, but I had to respond to attacks on my country.