

Mr. Rai (Papua New Guinea):

On behalf of my country, Papua New Guinea, I convey our sincere congratulations to your country, Sweden, Mr. President, on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January. We also congratulate the new members of the Security Council, namely, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Italy, Kazakhstan and the Netherlands. We look forward to working with the members of the Security Council to achieve the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome our new Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, on his assumption of office, and to express our confidence and best wishes that his strategic leadership will further strengthen the work of the United Nations for the mutual benefit of we the peoples of the United Nations.

My delegation also commends Sweden for the timely convening of this open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. The theme is highly relevant given the unacceptable level of the increasing and continuing violence, the destruction and humanitarian catastrophe, at the hands of both State and non-State actors, which regrettably have been experienced in many parts of the world today. We are directly impacted by those persons who have fled their homelands to either save themselves or seek new opportunities to survive, as highlighted by the asylum seekers processing centre in my own country, Papua New Guinea.

Papua New Guinea welcomes the bold pronouncement by the new Secretary-General to foster and sustain global peace, including conflict prevention, as a strategic priority during his tenure. We also applaud the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to convene the high-level dialogue on the

theme “Building Sustainable Peace for All: Synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace”.

Sustaining peace as a core agenda of the United Nations must be fully and meaningfully supported by Security Council members and all other Member States in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. Parochial politics, which has been a nemesis of global peace and security, unfortunately has been a hallmark in the Council in recent years. That has cost countless innocent lives and livelihoods. It cannot be allowed to continue and needs to change, and change now.

My delegation is of the view that the solid foundations for sustaining peace, including conflict prevention, have been laid under the Charter of the United Nations and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. They include, most recently on 27 April 2016, the simultaneous adoption of resolution 2282 (2016) and of General

Assembly resolution 70/262, on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

What is required now is the fundamental issue of ensuring the political will and commitment for a paradigm shift that recognizes the importance of an integrated and comprehensive approach to peace, including conflict prevention. Those must include reforms of the outdated and inadequate existing structures, practices and policies; improved coherence and synergies among peace, human rights and sustainable development work in the United Nations system, such as in the Peacebuilding Commission; the mobilization of resources at a sustained and predictable level; and strengthening the partnership among all the relevant stakeholders. Moreover, country ownership and leadership in addressing the root causes of conflicts is pivotal.

My country learned from our decade-long internal bitter civil conflict in Bougainville, 29 years ago — a conflict that claimed many lives and livelihoods and whose impact is still felt today — that sustaining peace and enjoying its dividends entails the following: First, the imperative of investing political will and commitment in conflict prevention actions before, during, and after conflict; secondly, adequately addressing the underlying root causes of tensions and conflict; thirdly, the importance of peaceful dialogue to resolve conflicts; and, fourthly, the relevance and importance of proactively engaging women in peace processes.

Sustaining peace has intrinsic links to sustainable development. Indeed, the preamble of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that,

“[t]here can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development”. (*General Assembly resolution 70/1, preamble*)

The challenges that climate change poses to our sustainable development and their implications for international peace and security are particularly pertinent to Papua New Guinea and to the other Pacific island States. Just as armed conflict has led to mass movements of people, which has global peace and security implications, climate change is having a similar adverse effect. The loss of territory, food and water insecurity and the involuntary displacement of people from their homes and their quest to seek refuge elsewhere from the catastrophic effects of natural disasters and rising sea levels will inevitably lead to outbreaks in conflict over scarce resources if left unaddressed.

My delegation fully agrees with the Pacific island States Chair’s remarks on climate change, which I will not repeat here, except to note with regret the insignificant concrete or coordinated action at the international level to address the security implications of climate change.

As the primary organ under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security the Security Council needs to carefully consider and act decisively with regard to the growing concerns on the nexus between climate change and its security implications, before it is too late.

Finally, not least, I align my statement with the statement recently delivered by the Chair of the Pacific island small States. The full statement will be provided to the Secretariat.