

**Ms. Söder** (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden.

I would also like to thank the President for convening this important open debate, and the briefers for their contributions this morning.

I would like to say that, over the years, the United Nations has shown that it is uniquely placed to support efforts to prevent conflict and sustain peace. But we acknowledge that, to maintain that role in an ever-changing environment, the United Nations cannot do it alone. Efforts to meet challenges to peace and security in Africa will not be successful without the context-specific knowledge, understanding and ability that rest with regional and subregional organizations. I am of course speaking here both of the African Union (AU) and of the regional economic communities.

In a book published by Uppsala University that I just read, the author asks whether regional organizations are challengers or partners to the United Nations. My response would be, “both, and both in a good way”. While much progress has been made to enhance the United Nations-African Union partnership over the years, it is now essential that we move forward towards the implementation of the measures needed to make the partnership become sustainable and deliver concrete results. Open debates are important, but there is also a need to ensure that the Security Council systematically integrates the knowledge that we have accumulated into its daily work and that the regions are proactively consulted.

I would like to take this opportunity to also pay tribute to the sixth Secretary-General of the United Nations, the late Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Some of us remember that, already in 1992, his milestone report *An Agenda for Peace*, stated that regional action, paired with the efforts of the Security Council, could contribute to a deeper sense of participation, consensus and democratization in international affairs. We consider those words to remain truly valid today, and we, the Nordic countries, strongly believe that a new United Nations commitment for peace also needs to include a solid commitment to assisting African regional and subregional organizations. I would briefly like to highlight three areas that I believe are essential features of an enhanced partnership between the United Nations and the AU.

First, it almost goes without saying, but the partnership should be mutually reinforcing.

Secondly, the partnership should not only focus on the narrow peacekeeping aspects, but encompass conflict prevention and inclusive peacebuilding — in keeping with the recent resolutions on the United Nations peacebuilding, which signal a much-needed change in

our mindset by establishing a new concept of sustaining peace. We must not forget economic and social factors in that respect.

Thirdly, the partnership should address the need for predictable and sustainable funding arrangements for regional peace operations. The Nordic countries are deeply committed to ensuring that. In particular, we commend the efforts of Donald Kaberuka, High Representative of the AU Peace Fund.

A few weeks ago Sweden, together with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the AU Commission, organized a high-level forum in New York on the theme “The Africa we want in 2030, 2063 and beyond”. The forum confirmed that the continued and intensified promotion of peace and security was essential for creating a favourable environment for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1).

As we now work to adapt and revitalize United Nations structures to conform to the realities of today, it is of key importance that the linkages between the African Peace and Security Architecture and all the relevant parts of the United Nations, including the peacebuilding entities, be reinforced, and that this constitutes a cornerstone of a strengthened United Nations-African Union partnership.

Let me mention the Nordic countries’ continued support for the AU’s peace efforts. As part of that, our Nordic Defense Cooperation is already providing support to the Eastern Africa Standby Force through training events in national centres and programmes for the contributing countries.

Let me compliment the efforts of the African Union Mission in Somalia. I would mention women’s role in peace in Liberia and, perhaps less known, in Uganda recently. I also note Namibia’s role in launching resolution 1325 (2000) as far back as 2000, and I commend the ongoing efforts of the East African Community, the Economic Community of West African States and, not least, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which has many issues on its agenda.

A stronger United Nations-AU partnership will greatly contribute to reducing fragility and to fostering political stability and effective governance, not only in Africa but also in dealing with common challenges such as piracy, terrorism and climate change. The Nordic countries, out of the conviction that regional ownership is a precondition for legitimacy, effectiveness and success, will continue to support all those efforts. It is time for progress and partnership. And it is time to push for peace together.

