

**Sir Alan Duncan** (United Kingdom):

It gives me enormous pleasure to be able to sit here on behalf of the United Kingdom and extend a warm welcome to Mr. António Guterres as the new Secretary-General. On a very personal level, I recall the work that he and I did together when he was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and I was the United Kingdom's Minister of State for International

Development. I am glad that such cooperation can continue in both of our new roles. I hope that the United Kingdom's generous aid budget, much of which used to go in the direction of the Office of the High Commissioner, will not be forgotten.

Mr. Guterres assumes his role at a time of widespread instability and the existence of far too many long-running conflicts across the world. The United Kingdom firmly believes in the role of the United Nations in upholding the fundamental principles of a rules-based international order, which must underpin our understanding of what is right and what is wrong in the world.

I would also like to thank the Swedish presidency for convening today's open debate. You and I, Madam President, have also worked together in the past, when you were Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict. I salute your continuing efforts to place conflict prevention and gender at the centre of your foreign policy.

Ever since the inception of the United Nations, the United Kingdom has been at the forefront of decisive action by the United Nations to prevent conflict. On this very day, 71 years ago, London hosted the first meeting of the General Assembly. On the agenda in 1946 were two issues that we still face today: sustaining peace, and supporting refugees driven from their homes by the scourge of war. Both seven decades ago and today, the work of the United Nations on those issues — and, of course, many more — remains fundamentally about addressing conflict.

However, we should recognize that while the issues may seem the same seven decades on, the response of the United Nations certainly is not. We have tools at our disposal that our predecessors never had. We have tools for conflict prevention, mitigation, mediation, stabilization and recovery. Thus, the challenge is how to use such tools effectively and, often, many of them at the same time. We therefore fully endorse the Secretary-General's vision for an inclusive approach to conflict prevention, peace and development — the peace continuum — and his commitment to achieving the reforms needed to deliver it. The United Kingdom sees five key building blocks in the realization of that vision.

First, there is development. We share the Secretary-General's view that development is

fundamental to addressing the drivers of conflict. That is why our own

aid budget is increasingly focused on the world's most fragile places. The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States laid the foundations for achieving the global goals of the United Nations. Together, we now must build on those foundations and harness the political and security tools of the United Nations.

Secondly, we need to equip ourselves with the expertise needed to take action sooner. Two obvious steps are improving situational awareness, which builds on New Zealand's recent work, and supporting senior United Nations officials when they flag risks and challenge the Council to respond. The recent briefing on South Sudan by Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, is an excellent example.

Thirdly, we need to recommit to making greater use of Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, including enabling the Secretary-General to make full use of the tools at his disposal, such as his own good offices and expert mediation by his envoys and others.

Fourthly, we need to encourage regional responsibility, because, try as we might to seek solutions from New York, the best solutions are often found at the local level. We should continue to support regional organizations that show leadership in preventing conflict. That includes organizations that span multiple regions. For example, the Commonwealth has dedicated Commonwealth Day and the ensuing year to peace-building, with a focus on practical action among its 52 member States.

Finally, we must ensure that United Nations deployments are fit for purpose. That means that they must be properly prepared and equipped, with each mission tailored to the task at hand. It means that the Council must be prepared to focus its resources in order to deliver those effective missions. It means that we must deliver what we are calling "the three P's", as agreed upon at the Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in London in September 2016: better mission planning, more pledges of personnel and equipment, and improved performance.

The tools of the United Nations provide the best means to prevent conflict and lay the foundations for sustained peace. However, we must deploy the right tools at the right time. In many cases, that means that we should deploy them sooner — warning rather than reacting, and mediating rather than peacekeeping. That is why the peace continuum is so important. It requires us to develop greater awareness of possible flashpoints so that we can chart a more peaceful course.

We agree with the Secretary-General that if this great Organization is to continue to achieve its objectives, it must be simpler, more decentralized and more flexible. I am confident that between the Secretariat and Member States, we have the knowledge, skills

and will to make that happen. Today, I reiterate the pledge of the United Kingdom that we will fully support that effort, just as did 71 years ago.