

Statement of Ghana: Security Council Open Debate on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security, Optimizing the Use of Preventive Diplomacy Tools: Prospects and Challenges in Africa

16 July 2010

**H.E. Mr. Leslie Kojo Christian** Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Representative (Ghana):

At the outset, the Ghana delegation wishes to congratulate Nigeria on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July and for the remarkable skill with which its delegation has guided the work of the Council since the beginning of the month. We are particularly pleased to see you, Your Excellency, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, personally chair today's meeting. My delegation also wishes to commend Mexico for ably presiding over the Council last month.

Mr. President, the valuable concept paper your delegation prepared for this debate (S/2010/371, annex) highlights a variety of pertinent issues and dimensions of the important question of preventive diplomacy, with particular reference to Africa. My delegation will attempt to address some of them.

Today, the ebbing — if not the resolution — of the many violent conflicts that have afflicted the African continent presents an opportunity for its people and Governments, acting in partnership with the United Nations, to pay greater attention to preventive diplomacy as a strategy to prevent conflicts from breaking out in the first place and to prevent those countries emerging from conflicts of crises from experiencing a relapse or escalation, as the case may be.

For the people of Africa, the prevention of conflicts is no longer only a matter of peace and security, but also a development imperative. This paradigm shift is underscored in the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) and the protocol on the establishment of the AU Peace and Security Council, as well as in legal instruments and regional organizations such as the revised Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Treaty and the ECWOAS Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Mediation, Management and Resolution.

The international community, including Africa's development partners and the United Nations, needs to sustain and intensify engagement with Africa for the more effective implementation of the various African initiatives aimed at strengthening preventive diplomacy and enhancing the prospects for preventing conflicts on the continent. Those initiatives include the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the African Peer Review Mechanism and the AU Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development, as well as the various African declarations against coups d'état and other unconstitutional changes in government.

These African initiatives are intended to prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes. In that way, our commitment to preventive diplomacy should find expression in our relentless resolve and action to promote constitutional democracy underpinned by good political and economic governance, the promotion of the rule of law, respect for human rights, free and fair elections, social justice, including the equitable distribution of national resources in a non-discriminatory manner, the deepening of national integration and harmonious inter-ethnic relations. We must also commit ourselves to addressing other causes of conflict, including terrorism, corruption and transnational organized crimes such as illicit trafficking in drugs, arms and persons.

The role of women and that of civil society in this regard should not only be tolerated but encouraged to ensure that no section of society is left behind in our national, regional and international efforts to prevent conflicts.

Equally deserving of the more serious support of the international community are African initiatives and practical arrangements such as the African standby forces arrangement, intended to make Africans ready to undertake more effective preventive deployment of personnel or to intervene in conflicts in a timely and effective manner.

To redeem the promise of the Charter to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which plagued the peoples of the world in the last century, there is an urgent need for the international community to grant priority attention to the prevention of conflicts around the world, and in Africa in particular, which features in the overwhelming majority of the situations on the agenda of this Council.

It is time we saw the value of preventive diplomacy in terms of the incalculable cost of waiting until conflicts have erupted and the fact that when they do they occur, it takes a long time, and sometimes the sacrifices of a generation of youth, before it is finally resolved or simply brought under control. Simply put, we should value preventive diplomacy on the basis of the cost of doing little or nothing to prevent conflicts. When conflicts do occur, they destroy investments, retard social progress and undermine overall development in any given country or region.

To succeed in placing preventive diplomacy at the top of our agenda, we must also embrace a shift in thinking and new concepts such as the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and the incitement of such acts. This was recognized by world leaders in their adoption of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (General Assembly resolution 60/1) and also finds a place as a treaty principle in article 4 of the AU Constitutive Act.

In conclusion, I wish to stress that preventive diplomacy will be taken more seriously if States and other international actors endeavour to strike an appropriate balance between the competing values and principles of sovereignty and solidarity, non-interference and non-indifference and sovereign independence and global interdependence.

I wish to recall the proposal made by Ghana in the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations calling for ways to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in areas of preventive diplomacy, including peacekeeping and peacebuilding, under the Charter, which has been generally welcomed favourably for further consideration in that Committee. In this context, Ghana supports the presidential statement adopted today and looks forward to giving input on how to optimize the use of preventive diplomacy tools within the United Nations system and in cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and other actors.

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