



# Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

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 New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Meza-Cuadra . . . . . (Peru)

*Members:*

Belgium . . . . .	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China . . . . .	Mr. Yao Shaojun
Côte d'Ivoire . . . . .	Mr. Ipo
Dominican Republic . . . . .	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea . . . . .	Mr. Esono Mbengono
France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivière
Germany . . . . .	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia . . . . .	Mr. Syihab
Kuwait . . . . .	Mr. Alotaibi
Poland . . . . .	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Polyanskiy
South Africa . . . . .	Mr. Mabhongo
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Hickey
United States of America . . . . .	Ms. Norman-Chalet

## Agenda

### Peace consolidation in West Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (S/2019/549)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Peace consolidation in West Africa**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (S/2019/549)**

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/549, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel.

I now give the floor to Mr. Chambas.

**Mr. Chambas:** I am honoured to be in the Chamber today to introduce the latest report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) (S/2019/549).

I have four key messages to share with the Security Council today with regard to the developments in West Africa and the Sahel. First, since my last briefing (see S/PV.8442), further progress has been made in democratic consolidation in West Africa and the Sahel. Secondly, such progress in the democratic space has not been linear or without complications; it has been the result of contestations that have sometimes been palpably antagonistic. Thirdly, democratic progress has been delayed and complicated and, on occasion, almost negated by a rapid expansion of violent extremism in the region. My fourth and final message, in recognition of the progress made and despite continuing challenges, is one of hope for the future and confidence in the Council's support as we work together towards sustaining peace and preventing conflict in West Africa and the Sahel.

Indeed, we should first of all recognize and celebrate the progress made in the consolidation of democracy in the region, including through peaceful transfers of power. In the past six months, presidential

elections were organized in Nigeria, on 23 February; Senegal, on 24 February; and Mauritania, on 22 June. Ahead of those fiercely contested elections, I met all of the presidential candidates and conveyed to them, alongside regional and international partners, the need to uphold high electoral standards in the region. In Nigeria, my Office also organized, jointly with the National Peace Committee and other partners, several peace forums to appease tensions in electoral hotspots.

Beyond successful elections, the past six months also saw the opening of political dialogue between the ruling Governments and the oppositions in Burkina Faso and Benin, while in Ghana political stakeholders started a dialogue on vigilante groups. In Liberia, on 7 July, the Government indicated its respect for the right to peaceful protests and agreed to begin a dialogue on strengthening the economy.

However, pre- and post-electoral periods continue to be characterized by tensions, antagonistic contests and disputes, including around non-consensual constitutional amendments. Addressing such potential sources of conflict remains a major priority ahead of the upcoming cycle of high-stake presidential elections in West Africa, scheduled for next year in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, the Niger and Togo. Furthermore, tensions around electoral periods derail the attention that must be given to the pressing need to address questions of development and inequality.

My second message is therefore that the journey of democratic consolidation in the region has not been easy and cannot be taken for granted. Several countries in the region continue to struggle with human rights challenges. I am particularly concerned about the instrumentalization of the judiciary for political objectives in some cases and a predominant sentiment of impunity for violent crimes, which undermine respect for the rule of law. In this sense, I commend the exemplary path chosen by the Gambia, in which the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission and the National Human Rights Commission have embarked on their challenging tasks in a credible manner that has contributed to transitional justice and social cohesion.

While the region saw a slight increase in the number of female members of Government — and the first-ever appointment of a female speaker of parliament, in Togo — women's representation remains a matter of concern. A persistently high level of inequality continues to have negative impacts on women, making

them prone to gender-based violence. The passing of legislation in Cabo Verde classifying gender-based violence as a priority prevention crime must be applauded in this context.

Thirdly, since my last briefing, the region of West Africa and the Sahel has witnessed an even more visible and significant rise in violent attacks directly related to violent extremism. The security situation remains volatile in the entire Sahel region, where escalating violence and insecurity have sparked an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, leaving a total of 5.1 million Burkinabes, Nigeriens and Malians in need. Notably, the past six months have shown a rapid deterioration of the security situation in Burkina Faso. A total of 226 security incidents contributed to an acceleration in the displacement of persons, rising from 47,000 in December 2018 to 220,000 internally displaced and more than 25,000 refugees in June, representing an almost five-fold increase. The north and east of the country remain the areas most affected by recurrent attacks of terrorist and armed groups and an increase in intercommunal violence, with the involvement of seemingly uncontrolled self-defence groups. Furthermore, terrorist groups are directly targeting schools and forcing health centres to close. Today, a total of 2,024 schools and 37 health centres remain closed in Burkina Faso as a direct result of the crisis.

Amid the rapid escalation, Secretary-General Guterres has requested a significant scaling-up of the United Nations response and has put in place an emergency task force in Burkina Faso. The task force also builds on the findings of an inter-agency mission that I was privileged to lead to Burkina Faso in February and which defined a multisectoral response that would address immediate needs and the structural causes of insecurity. A humanitarian response plan with a budget of \$100 million has been launched and is currently being revised upwards to accommodate rising needs.

In the Lake Chad basin, attacks by Boko Haram terrorists and splinter groups continue to threaten the peace and stability of the region. In the first half of this year, 30 suicide bombings were reported, a 70 per cent reduction on the number from last year, owing to the efforts of the Multinational Joint Task Force. However, the period under review also witnessed the deadliest attack to date on the Chadian military, where Boko Haram fighters killed 23 soldiers in Dangdala. The terrorist group also attempted to launch a rocket attack on the airport in Diffa and led seemingly more

sophisticated terrorist attacks in other parts of the Niger. As of June, at least 147 civilians have been kidnapped in the Diffa region, the highest number since 2015.

In view of this rapid escalation, including growing linkages among terrorism, organized crime and intercommunity clashes in the region, the Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States decided, during their summit on 29 June, to hold an extraordinary summit on terrorism in Ouagadougou, now scheduled for 14 September. The summit will aim to discuss a concerted security approach for West Africa and the Sahel and represents a unique window of opportunity to harmonize the fragmented security arrangements.

While the implementation of humanitarian response plans has seen laudable support, I urge Governments and partners to redouble their efforts aimed at defining a concerted approach to preventing a further expansion of the terrorist threat and fostering support for greatly needed medium- and long-term stabilization measures, in line with the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel (UNISS). In this regard, the second meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Governors Forum, which took place only last week, on 17 and 18 July, in Niamey, once again stressed the importance of holistic approaches for effectively tackling instability in West Africa and the Sahel and successfully launched a stabilization facility for the Lake Chad region. Through inclusive approaches based on national ownership and in line with UNISS, we must continue to work harder at addressing governance deficits, extreme poverty and the lack of development that feed and sustain armed violence and extremism. Enhanced support for the implementation of the Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region and the Priority Investment Programme of the Group of Five for the Sahel, together with a concerted effort to support national development plans, remains essential for boosting development of the region and exploring its full potential.

This is my fourth and final message of hope: with support from the Council and guided by the inclusive national ownership of the countries of the region — and the region as a whole — I am confident that the consolidation of democracy can be further strengthened and the activities of violent extremists better addressed and countered through preventive measures.

In conclusion, let me assure Council members of the continued commitment of UNOWAS to working with all stakeholders in the region to promote peace and stability in West Africa and the Sahel. I trust that we can continue to rely on the support of the Council. In this regard, I am looking forward to the strategic review of UNOWAS, which should contribute immensely to responding to our quest for adequate resources that enable us to sharpen our tools for preventing conflicts and sustaining peace. I thank Council members for their support and look forward to working further with them.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Chambas for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

**Mr. Ipo** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the African States members of the Security Council, namely Equatorial Guinea, South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire, I wish to thank the Peruvian presidency for convening this briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) (S/2019/549). The African States members of the Council commend Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOWAS, on his briefing, which once again enlightened the Council on the profound forces affecting peace, stability and development in West Africa and the Sahel.

The African States members of the Council note with great interest the political, economic, security and humanitarian situation described by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his subsequent recommendations aimed at providing diligent and effective responses to the multiple challenges facing the region. They welcome the generally stable regional political situation, as evidenced by the calm post-electoral sociopolitical environments following the presidential elections held in 2018. In addition, according to the African Development Bank, economic trends as a whole show an average forecasted growth of 3.6 per cent for this year and 2020. We see those trends as promising and believe that they are part of the irreversible process of profound change currently under way in the societies of West Africa and the Sahel, despite current challenges.

We therefore urge the Head of UNOWAS to pursue mediation efforts and use his good offices, in close cooperation with the Economic Community of West

African States (ECOWAS), in view of the elections in many countries of the region planned for 2020, particularly since the cooperation between ECOWAS and UNOWAS was fully effective in preventing and managing crises as seen in their successive interventions in Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Burkina Faso and the Gambia. We also urge UNOWAS to work to strengthen national and regional capacities for conflict resilience and to support the consolidation of democracy and good governance, in order to foster environments conducive to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At the same time, we are particularly encouraged by the efforts to improve gender parity in the region, thanks to the adoption of relevant legislation that we hope will increase the number of women in leadership roles and strengthen their effective participation in decision-making processes.

Despite encouraging governance trends, we remain concerned about the security threats posed by non-State actors, particularly terrorist groups, whose actions appear to be part of larger designs to create a foothold for an Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant province in the region. The concerns raised by these aspirations, which are at odds with the values underpinning our States, are compounded by a constantly deteriorating humanitarian situation and the exacerbation of community violence. Indeed, terrorist groups are unfortunately increasingly profiting from intercommunal violence and conflicts between herders and farmers that are born from the management of natural resources, such as water and farmland. In this regard, it is urgent to develop measures for resolving intercommunal violence and conflicts between farmers and herders, which constitute a growing threat to security in West Africa and the Sahel and extend to Central Africa. We welcome the commitment of the States of the region to unifying and better coordinating their efforts, as well as the holding on 14 September of an extraordinary summit of the Heads of State of ECOWAS to discuss security issues and consider a broad coalition beyond their region to combat terrorism in the Sahel.

In a regional sociopolitical context marked by persistent security challenges, we remain convinced that UNOWAS remains a relevant institutional tool, the actions of which are perfectly in line with the range of regional efforts for fighting insecurity and instability and seeking durable solutions to the underlying causes. In view of the next strategic review, which we



support, we stress that UNOWAS's highly political role as a tool for preventive diplomacy should be kept in mind. UNOWAS must remain a mediation and conflict-prevention tool, including through supporting subregional organizations and advocating major issues such as sustainable development.

In the light of UNOWAS's achievements, the array of current challenges it faces and its key role in managing the transitions that are necessary following the closure of certain missions, it is important that it benefit from the additional resources required to implement its mandate. We must also ensure that its actions are streamlined and consistent with those of other United Nations operations, as part of an integrated approach, which would further enhance the Office's effectiveness.

In addition, the transregional dimension of threats to peace and security requires a strategic interaction between UNOWAS and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa to address cross-border issues as part of a coordinated and holistic approach. We also welcome the collaboration of UNOWAS with the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund in supporting national and cross-border programmes aimed at mitigating tensions related to the effects of climate change and conflicts related to transhumance, preventing violent extremism and empowering youth and women in peacebuilding processes and conflict-prevention mechanisms.

The African States members of the Council believe that the current security responses must be accompanied by development strategies aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict and meeting the pressing social needs of populations. We therefore welcome the establishment of the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel, the aim of which is to intensify and better coordinate support for the States of the region in their efforts aimed at achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in order to achieve shared prosperity and a secure environment in the Sahel, in line with the African Union's vision of silencing the guns on the African continent.

In conclusion, the African States members of the Council reiterate their support for the Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. We urge him to continue his mediation efforts and good offices and to mobilize the resources that are essential for achieving the SDGs in West Africa and the Sahel. Equatorial Guinea, South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire

truly hope that the forthcoming strategic review will further strengthen UNOWAS, so that it can continue to be an effective tool for preventive diplomacy to advance peace, security and development in West Africa and the Sahel.

**Mr. Pecsteen de Buyswerve** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, let me thank Special Representative Chambas for his very comprehensive insights. Belgium commends the Special Representative's daily work on prevention, mediation, lasting peace and the promotion of the rule of law in West Africa and the Sahel.

The precarious security situation continues to be a cause for our concern. In particular, I note the intensification of intercommunal violence in several countries of the region, such as Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Mali, as well as unabating terrorist attacks. This deterioration has a direct impact on the humanitarian situation, causing the suffering of hundreds of thousands of innocent people.

The persistence of conflicts between herders and farmers deserves special attention, as these tensions are currently a major factor of insecurity in the subregion and beyond. I would like to congratulate the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) for broadly raising awareness on the subject. It is now a matter of implementing the various good practices that have been identified, particularly in collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States.

Belgium applauds the courage and sacrifice of the security forces in their fight against terrorists throughout the region. Nevertheless, my country believes that the conflict cannot be resolved by ignoring human rights; doing so will mean that the successes of the security forces will be fleeting and will jeopardize reconciliation and the ending of long-lasting crises. Furthermore, as the Secretary-General emphasizes in his report (S/2019/549), a response to the challenges facing West Africa cannot involve security alone. A holistic approach is needed to address violent extremism, while also highlighting good governance, the fight against impunity and sustainable and inclusive development.

UNOWAS plays a leading role in studying the impact of climate change on security, as part of a conflict-prevention approach. This work is crucial, and I encourage the Special Representative to continue this effort.

In conclusion, I would also like to underline the key role played by regional and subregional organizations. I welcome their close coordination with UNOWAS and encourage them to maintain this coordination in the future.

**Mr. De Riviere** (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel for his briefing, which was as always very clear.

The situation in West Africa deserves our full attention today. In this regard, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) is a valuable tool in terms of its role in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and support for various regional initiatives. Its role is fully in keeping with the Secretary-General's vision for action across the peace continuum. We therefore hope that the strategic review to be announced in the coming months ensures that UNOWAS has the resources necessary to fulfil its important mission.

The deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel poses an unprecedented risk to the stability of West Africa as a whole. The States of the Group of Five for the Sahel are the first to be affected today, but others will soon face the same challenges if adequate responses are not urgently provided. It is therefore a real race against the clock to stabilize the Sahel — an undertaking to which we are today collectively committed. It involves the urgent implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, a determined fight against the terrorist groups of the region, good governance and the creation of sustainable economic prospects for the population. More must also be done in the Lake Chad basin to support the continued mobilization of the States of the Multinational Joint Task Force and to ensure that its activity is conducted in ways that ensure the full support of the population. Only an approach that combines political, security and development efforts is likely to change the situation in the medium term.

The United Nations has a central role to play in assisting States in the region to develop adequate responses in all of those areas. In Burkina Faso, France fully supports the process initiated by the Secretary-General to that end. We hope that the United Nations response will be ambitious and meet the expectations of the Burkinabe authorities in the fields of humanitarian aid and development, the training of national security

forces, respect for human rights, promotion of the rule of law and support for the fight against terrorism.

Beyond our mobilization on those crisis situations, it is more important than ever to preserve the fundamentals of regional stability in West Africa and the Sahel. This means, first of all, holding credible, transparent and inclusive elections. In Guinea-Bissau, it is essential that the authorities respect their commitment to organizing presidential elections in November, in accordance with procedures recommended by the Economic Community of West African States and the Security Council. In other countries, such as Togo, Benin and Guinea, it is important that all actors continue to work together to strengthen the inclusiveness and suitability of upcoming elections. Finally, particular attention must be paid to strengthening the representation of women in areas of responsibility, which today is far from satisfactory in the countries of the region.

Respecting the rights of all and fighting impunity are also essential factors of stability. The multiple abuses committed against civilians in the various conflict zones of the region must not be left unanswered, regardless of who is behind them. Ongoing transitional justice processes, particularly in Mali and the Gambia, must be successfully concluded to create conditions for lasting reconciliation. There must also be full and complete cooperation with the International Criminal Court. The protection of children in conflict and the situation of the increasing number of internally displaced persons and refugees in the area must receive our full attention, and UNOWAS has a clear role to play in addressing these issues.

Stability also goes hand in hand with long-term support for countries emerging from crisis. The continued mobilization of the international community in Liberia, following the closure of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, is particularly critical to the success of the remarkable democratic transition that took place there a year and a half ago.

I will conclude by emphasizing that the link between climate and security is becoming increasingly evident in the countries of the Sahel. The effects of climate change are stoking tensions over resources, with a direct impact on the population. However, the sustainable management of these resources, such as water and farmland, is one of the essential conditions for the maintenance of stability in an area like the Sahel that is marked by political and social vulnerability

and major forced population displacement. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, as well as the establishment of a regional dialogue on climate and environmental issues, is essential in that respect. It is important for UNOWAS to fully take these considerations into account in its day-to-day work.

**Ms. Wronecka** (Poland): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, for his very informative briefing on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the current developments in the region.

Poland noted many positive developments in West Africa and the Sahel during the reporting period. We commend Benin, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal for holding generally peaceful elections and having experienced the alternation of power. Against this positive backdrop, pre- and post-electoral periods continue to be characterized by tensions, antagonistic confrontations and disputes. We therefore encourage national authorities and stakeholders to work together to ensure conditions conducive to peaceful, inclusive and credible elections.

In that context, the equal participation of women and youth in political, social and economic processes is of the utmost importance. While welcoming the progress made in the adoption and implementation of gender-parity legislation in several countries in the region, we call on national authorities to enhance the participation of women and youth through national peace, security and development strategies.

We remain gravely concerned by the deteriorating security situation in West Africa and the Sahel, resulting in spiralling terrorist activities and violent extremism. The serious humanitarian consequences, including a lack of access to basic services — especially health, education, food and markets — are a matter of serious concern. We are also concerned about the increasingly visible involvement of extremist groups in several West African countries. It is necessary to help these countries build resilience to new threats, including ethnic and religious conflicts inspired by extremists. It is equally important to support local Governments in the prevention of inter-tribal conflicts and to fight the dissemination of stereotypes, the aim of which may be to marginalize certain social and political groups and destabilize the situation in the region.

We therefore call on national, regional and international partners to intensify their efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of insecurity and instability in the region, including poverty and inequality, exclusion and marginalization, the lack of access to social services and economic opportunities, human rights violations and the impact of climate change. The cross-border character of these threats requires transnational responses. In this context, we commend the efforts being made by countries participating in the Multinational Joint Task Force and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) to address the multifaceted challenges in the region.

The challenges in West Africa and the Sahel are complex and multidimensional and require a sustained and holistic approach from all stakeholders. In this regard, we commend the engagement of all partners in addressing these challenges, including through the implementation of the Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region, the G-5 Sahel Priority Investment Programme, the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel. Accordingly, we also wish to commend the Governments of West Africa and the Sahel, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the G-5 Sahel, the Mano River Union, the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the Lake Chad Basin Commission, for their engagement and cooperation with UNOWAS.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, as well as the staff of UNOWAS, for their continued efforts to advance peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, for his briefing. We would like once again to assure him that Russia supports his personal efforts, as well as those of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), in resolving regional crises, addressing issues related to political mediation and providing assistance to improving State institutions, as well as supporting the search for ways to pursue economic development and the fight against terrorism. The scale and results of his work deserve the highest praise.

It is encouraging that the political situation in the region as a whole has remained stable. In the first half of this year, elections were held in many countries of the region — Nigeria, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and Benin — without serious problems. We trust that the electoral cycles that are in progress in other West African countries will also take place under conditions of law and order.

However, the security situation in the Sahara-Sahel region and in several West African countries remains complicated. The international terrorists who have gained a foothold there are increasing the scale of their activities and attempting to expand their areas of operation, and new radical groups and leaders are emerging. This situation is rooted in the external intervention and subsequent collapse of statehood in Libya in 2011. The acute domestic political and socioeconomic problems that persist in countries of the Sahel, as well as inter-ethnic and interreligious confrontations, are fuelling the activities of an extensive network of jihadist structures. Collective steps taken by States in the region and external partners to counter these challenges have not yet led to a breakthrough in the fight against extremists.

In Mali, a protracted conflict remains ongoing, aggravated by the intervention of various terrorist groups in the region and a power vacuum in the north and the centre of the country. The firmly embedded international extremists are expanding their activities into neighbouring countries, such as the Niger, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire. The number of victims from jihadist attacks is on the rise. Disquieting assessments in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/549) and the conclusions drawn from the Security Council's visit to the region in March are testament to the infeasibility of drawing down the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali at this stage.

In Nigeria, the Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso, the terrorist activities of Boko Haram are expanding, and Burkina Faso has also seen the appearance of the Ansar Al-Islam group, which is affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The international and African communities are keeping a constant focus on the situation in the Sahara-Sahel region. An important element of the work in this area is the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), which aims to improve the effectiveness of State governance, strengthen the capacities of national and regional security mechanisms and carry out development

activities in the countries of the region. Financial, military and humanitarian assistance continues to be provided through various international programmes, United Nations missions and on a bilateral basis. The Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) is pursuing its efforts to ensure the full-fledged deployment of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force in order to combat terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking. The Joint Force has already carried out several operations on the ground to date.

We greatly appreciate the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and specialized agencies of the United Nations in providing a broad range of assistance to West African countries. It is crucial that such efforts be undertaken in close coordination with the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and other organizations. We believe that it is important to improve the effectiveness of UNISS and the related United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel. In implementing these instruments, the views of the countries for which they have been developed are of the primary importance.

We believe that it will be impossible to get anything done without the proper coordination of the numerous assistance programmes for the region. Their effectiveness depends, inter alia, on whether the structures present there — first and foremost those within the United Nations system — are acting within their sphere of responsibility and taking into account the principle of the division of labour. It is only through collective focused actions, carried out in relevant formats that do not create conflicting mandates, that will we be able to achieve the desired results.

Russia continues to play an active role in resolving the problems in West Africa and the Sahel. We are taking steps to establish effective cooperation with the G-5 Sahel. In April, the Permanent Secretary of that entity, Mr. Maman Sidikou, and his team, visited Moscow for the first time. During the visit, agreements were reached on strengthening full-fledged practical cooperation.

On a bilateral basis, we continue to provide assistance to strengthen the combat-readiness of the armies and security structures of States in the region. In particular, military personnel and police officers from Mali, the Niger and Burkina Faso continue to receive training at specialized Russian facilities. We



intend to continue to provide such assistance to our West African friends.

**Ms. Norman-Chalet** (United States of America): I wish to thank the Special Representative Chambas, for his informative briefing today and for his leadership of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS).

The latest report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOWAS (S/2019/549) underscored just how varied the realities are in West Africa. From presidential and parliamentary elections where people freely and fairly chose their preferred candidates, to continued insecurity in the Sahel, where terrorism and armed conflict have interrupted livelihoods and made millions subject to food insecurity, the positive and negative developments in West Africa are as big and diverse as the region itself. UNOWAS has played an important role in West Africa, and the United States deeply appreciates the Office's efforts aimed at supporting long-term peace, security and stability in the region.

West Africa has seen several noteworthy positive developments over the past six months, as was highlighted in the Council today. The United States is encouraged by the success of the largely peaceful elections held in Nigeria, Senegal and Mauritania, and we extend our particular appreciation to Special Representative Chambas for his efforts in all countries to emphasize the importance of dispute-resolution processes rather than violence as a means of pursuing grievances arising from the electoral process. In addition, we are encouraged by the Secretary-General's projection of high economic growth across the region for 2019 and 2020. While we know that such projections are uneven across West African countries, we are nevertheless optimistic that such economic performance, when coupled with responsible fiscal policy and good governance, is a bellwether for the region's future.

At the same time, the United States is deeply concerned about the increase in security and governance challenges across the region. Transnational organized crime and the illicit trafficking of narcotics continue to undermine responsible governance and fuel corruption in Guinea-Bissau. We call on Government authorities to maintain the momentum towards genuinely free and fair presidential elections in November and encourage all political leaders to refrain from volatile rhetoric.

In Burkina Faso, the terrorism threat emanating from Mali is fuelling instability and has displaced hundreds of thousands, curtailed Government services in some areas and disrupted livelihoods. We are concerned by the potential spillover of the situation into neighbouring countries. We encourage the Government of Burkina Faso to continue to address the root causes of instability and work with regional partners to address the growing terrorism threat. In addition, we request that UNOWAS continue its efforts in security sector reform.

In Mali, we are troubled by the insufficient progress in implementing the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation emanating from the Algiers process, and by the insecurity in central Mali that has exacerbated ethnic and intercommunal tensions. Such violence has negatively affected such institutions as health facilities and schools, which provide basic services, and forced hundreds of thousands from their homes. With the recent renewal of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali (resolution 2480 (2019)), the United States calls on the Government of Mali and the signatory armed groups to use this opportunity to take urgent steps to implement the provisions of the resolution.

While the United States is a strong supporter of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) as a long-term security initiative in the region and has provided \$111 million to help operationalize it, we must emphasize the need for the Council to comprehensively review the problem of terrorism and its root causes across the whole of West Africa, not just the Sahel. It is time to transform the stand-alone report and briefing on the G-5 Sahel Joint Force into a broader discussion on terrorism challenges and root causes across West Africa, with spillover to the littoral States of the Accra initiative. This broader review should draw attention to the impact of the conflicts on millions of people across the region and the efforts of all Governments of the States of the region to prevent and counter radicalization and terrorism in general.

We must also focus on the threats emanating from north-eastern Nigeria. Throughout the Lake Chad region, the United States is supportive of coordinated multinational efforts to bring long-term stability to a region that has suffered for far too long from the predations of Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province. Terrorism remains a threat to millions, and affected countries must redouble their comprehensive efforts to counter these actors, protect the civilian population and create the conditions for the

safe, dignified return of the displaced. We share the Secretary-General's emphasis on the need to address the root causes of insecurity and instability, including inequality, exclusion and marginalization, human rights violations and abuses, sexual violence and a lack of opportunity and proper livelihoods. To that end, the United States is working closely with Sahel countries and international partners to support integrated security-sector response efforts. In 2018 alone, we committed more than \$242 million in overall security assistance to the G-5 Sahel countries.

The United States is committed to supporting the millions of people across the region who have suffered for too long from the worst of such conflict and instability.

**Mr. Alotaibi** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, for his valuable briefing on the latest developments in the Sahel region. I also wish to commend the efforts and activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) for having provided support to countries in the region in which elections recently took place, for supporting the good offices of Governments in the region with a view to reducing tensions and differences between States, and for playing a key role in promoting cooperation among Governments in the face of security challenges.

I should like to focus on three key issues: the security situation, the humanitarian and development situation, and the role of UNOWAS.

First, with regard to the security situation, we wish to once again highlight the deteriorating security situation in the Sahel and Lake Chad basin in recent times, in particular the terrorist attacks carried out by armed groups in Burkina Faso, the Niger, Nigeria and Mali. Despite the positive developments in West Africa and the Sahel mentioned in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2019/549), the increasing number of terrorist acts and suicide bombings perpetrated by armed groups, claiming the lives of hundreds of civilians, have negatively affected peace and stability in a number of countries in the region. It is therefore incumbent upon Governments in the region and the international community as a whole to cooperate with each other and intensify their efforts in addressing security shortcomings.

We call on the Multinational Joint Task Force and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) to continue their efforts in combating the terrorist organization Boko Haram and other armed terrorist groups, and we further encourage the G-5 Sahel Joint Force to capitalize on the support provided by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, in accordance with resolution 2480 (2019), which provides for extended support to all participating States. We also welcome the role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in coordinating regional efforts to combat common threats across the region. In that regard, we recall the final communiqué issued by the ECOWAS in Abuja on 29 June, which emphasizes the importance of fostering cooperation and the exchange of information among States in the region, with a view to combating terrorism. We also look forward to the convening of an ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit on terrorism to be held in Burkina Faso in the near future. The State of Kuwait supports all regional initiatives aimed at fostering cooperation among the countries of the region and ensuring their stability and prosperity.

Secondly, with respect to the humanitarian and development situation in the region, we must draw a link between the humanitarian situation and the deteriorating security situation. Owing to increased suicide bombings, armed attacks against farmers and herders, piracy and other maritime crimes, there has been an overall increase in hunger, poverty and epidemics, and the number of refugees and displaced persons has increased across the region. In addition, as a result of the violence, there has been a shortage of basic human services. For example, it is estimated that this year some 14 million people will require urgent humanitarian assistance in Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria.

I would like to commend the work being carried out by the various United Nations agencies to alleviate the suffering of refugees and others in need. We thank the Governments of countries in the region that have hosted refugees and urge all parties to commit to upholding the principles of human rights and ensuring unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance.

With regard to overcoming the various challenges facing the region, a comprehensive development approach must be adopted with a focus on capacity-building, strengthening Government infrastructures and fostering economic growth. Confronting these

challenges is the only way to address the root causes of conflict in the region. Security and development have always been closely linked to the wider development and prosperity of societies.

Thirdly, on the role of UNOWAS, the Office plays a critical role in developing the security sector and supporting political processes in West Africa and the Sahel. We have taken note of the significant efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his team. We commend the work of UNOWAS in supporting States' good offices in their mediation efforts to resolve disputes and support electoral processes across the region. We hope that these efforts will be expanded to include building security and development capacities in the Sahel and enabling States to combat organized crime and violence. We commend the role of UNOWAS in this regard.

**Mr. Yao Shaojun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Chambas for his briefing.

The recent situation in West Africa and the Sahel has generally been stable. Several countries have successfully held presidential, legislative and local elections, which China welcomes as a positive development. At the same time, terrorist attacks, transnational organized crime and other factors pose challenges to regional peace and security, while intercommunal conflicts and violence continue to grow.

In the light of the current situation, China wishes to touch on three points. First, we must vigorously support countries of the region in building their capacity and institutions. The Multinational Joint Task Force of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) have played an important role in combating terrorism at the regional level. Their approach has set a good example of how African countries can independently respond to regional challenges and maintain regional peace and security. The international community should continue to support African countries in their efforts and help them to strengthen their counter-terrorism capabilities. China supports the United Nations in providing the necessary financial support for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. Based on the specific requests of States, we should help them to establish mechanisms to prevent and address intercommunal conflicts and promote harmonious coexistence among communities.

Secondly, we should fully leverage the role of regional organizations and institutions, given that challenges such as terrorism are transnational in nature and especially given that the situation in Libya is having a spillover effect on West Africa and the Sahel. The coordinating role of relevant regional and subregional organizations must therefore be fully utilized. Regional and subregional organizations such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Lake Chad Basin Commission have unique advantages in facilitating dialogue, mediation and good offices and in promoting political solutions to regional problems. United Nations agencies should strengthen their collaboration with the AU, ECOWAS and other entities in order to help achieve peace and stability in the region.

Thirdly, attention should be given to resolving deep-rooted problems in the region. We should actively promote the economic and social development of countries in West Africa and the Sahel, focusing on improving such sectors as agriculture, health care, education, economy, trade, interconnectivity and infrastructure, help countries of the region to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to eradicate poverty, and provide them with strong support for their economic development, better livelihoods and job creation.

China appreciates the positive role played by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. We hope that, while respecting the sovereignty and leadership of the countries concerned, the Office will continue to strengthen communication and coordination with relevant countries and regional and subregional organizations, such as the AU and ECOWAS.

China attaches great importance to strengthening cooperation with Africa and developing countries. The Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which took place in September 2018, identified areas such as peace, security and economic development as the focus of China-Africa cooperation in future. China is actively implementing the China-Africa peace and security initiative, which was announced by President Xi Jinping at the Forum.

We have taken practical steps to support the Sahel region in its counter-terrorism operations and in the capacity-building of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. Within the framework of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, China has been fully and pragmatically

cooperating with West African countries, with a view to helping them accelerate development and strengthen their capacities. These measures reflect China's firm support for peace and development in West Africa and the Sahel. China is ready to work with the international community in continuing to play a constructive role in promoting long-term stability and security in the region.

**Mr. Heusgen** (Germany): I can be brief because I feel there is general unity in the Security Council on this issue. I should like to align myself in particular with the statements delivered by my European colleagues who have already taken the floor today.

First of all, I would like to express Germany's support for the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas. We support his analysis and recommendations. With regard to the analysis, there has been some progress made on the democratic front, with some very specific and positive steps having been taken. I would like to reiterate what he said with regard to the Gambia's Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission, what he said about Cabo Verde implementing resolution 2467 (2019) on sexual violence, and what he said about Senegal and Togo — two countries in which there are more women involved. Those are very good examples, and I hope that they are taken into account by others.

Nevertheless, the glass remains half empty. Mr. Chambas mentioned the violent extremism that is increasing in some areas, deterioration of security, human rights violations, gender-based violence in many countries, humanitarian crises, internally displaced persons, drug trafficking, and herders and farmers at each other's throats. In this context, I would like to highlight a point that we believe is very important even if it was not mentioned by many speakers today, namely, the security implications of climate change in the region.

In terms of actions going forward, I feel that when we put all of the burden on the United Nations, we must remember that the most important thing is national ownership. National Governments must do their homework — and the international community can support them in that — but there has to be national ownership. It has to be through national ownership that democratic rules are implemented, accountability guaranteed, the judiciary strengthened, the participation of women and wider civil society ensured, and the involvement of youth prioritized. Indeed, if we look at

the demographics, youth should be at the top of every Government's agenda. Furthermore, Governments must focus on good governance in general, acting with respect for national constitutions, particularly with regard to the length of presidential mandates. Of course, these are regional problems and therefore it is necessary to take a regional approach.

I also wish to highlight what Mr. Chambas said with regard to the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development. It is very positive that the Governors are genuinely addressing the problem of extremists and are working together with the Heads of State and the Governors of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as taking on board the views of other neighbouring countries in their work.

This is where the United Nations and its good offices can help, and therefore cooperation with ECOWAS and the Group of Five (G-5) for the Sahel is very important, as are the efforts being undertaken by Mr. Chambas and the Secretary-General with regard to the One United Nations approach. The members of the Security Council visited Mali and Burkina Faso and we witnessed the many challenges they face there, particularly in Burkina Faso, and how important One United Nations, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund are there. The latter is being used prolifically, which is something I can only encourage.

Finally, I would like to return to what I mentioned previously regarding the challenges posed by climate change. We support the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and are pleased to note that it is working specifically on the preparation of a report on climate-related security risks. Germany stands ready to support the United Nations. We are spending €50 million on strengthening the security sector in Burkina Faso. The G-5 Sahel is also on our priority list, and we have spent €150 million on the G-5 Sahel since 2016. We support the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Stabilization Facility for Lake Chad and have spent €40 million to this end, as we believe UNDP needs to play a very important role in the region.

**Mr. Singer Weisinger** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful to Mr. Chambas for his briefing and his good offices. We also support and commend the United Nations Office for West Africa



and the Sahel (UNOWAS) for promoting peace and stability in the region.

We note that the security situation throughout the majority of West Africa and the Sahel has remained relatively stable. This trend is reflected in the holding of peaceful elections in the region, as well as political dialogues and gradual progress in the implementation of agreements. In this context, we wish to refer to three fundamental issues.

First, regarding the security situation, we regret that attacks on civilians and security forces by terrorist groups, criminal networks and militias continue to be recorded in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Lake Chad basin. We acknowledge the efforts undertaken by Governments and communities in their actions to minimize violence; however, the security sector needs to be reformed and strengthened in order to combat this scourge. Deeper cross-border cooperation is also required.

Only with regional commitment to enhancing the capacity of the authorities to prevent and investigate terrorist and violent acts will it be possible to reduce attacks, sever armed groups from their livelihoods and reduce impunity. The security situation has not only caused deaths, but has resulted in massive population displacement, food insecurity and malnutrition and has decimated education and health services.

The second point I wish to highlight is the grave humanitarian situation in certain parts of the region. We echo the appeal made by the humanitarian community, which has requested \$1.6 billion but so far has received only 23 per cent of this figure.

Thirdly, turning to the environmental issue, despite the initiatives carried out by UNOWAS, we remain concerned about the effects of climate change in the region, especially in the Lake Chad basin. This could contribute to the more frequent occurrence of natural disasters that reduce the means of subsistence for the population. We encourage the international community to pursue its efforts in the implementation of strategies that enable risk assessment and contribute to strengthening the resilience of the most affected sectors. In that context, we must also establish channels of information and collaboration with local communities in order to expand early warning mechanisms to assist with joint planning.

West Africa is facing great challenges and, in order to overcome them we need a comprehensive regional analysis of the root causes of the conflicts. Based on the results of this analysis, we must implement sustainable and inclusive strategies that are focused on providing greater investment for the training of security forces. A collective political commitment with a road map and clear and realistic benchmarks is also essential. To that end, we look forward to the conclusion of the analysis and recommendations of the UNOWAS study on pastoralism and security in West Africa and the Sahel, as well as a road map that addresses the drivers of conflicts between herders and farmers.

It is critical to strengthen United Nations strategies for the entire region, to offer more opportunities for young people and women and to provide livelihoods through development and education. These are indispensable factors in order to achieve lasting peace and meet the Sustainable Development Goals in West Africa and the Sahel.

**Mr. Syihab** (Indonesia): I would like first to thank Special Representative Mohammed Ibn Chambas for his comprehensive briefing on the latest situation in West Africa and the Sahel, as well as the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS).

Indonesia fully supports the work of UNOWAS in West Africa and the Sahel. There has been commendable progress in areas such as political governance and women's participation. Yet, there remain challenges to overcome in ensuring peace, stability and development in the region.

The security situation in a number of countries of West Africa and the Sahel remains a cause for concern. As stated in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2019/549), there has been an upsurge in terrorist attacks and intercommunal violence fuelled by the activities of violent extremist groups. It also suggests that maritime crime, transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking have increased in the region. This has not only resulted in civilian casualties, but has also exacerbated the humanitarian situation.

In this vein, I would like to reiterate three main points which I deem important in order to address the security challenge in the region.

First, Indonesia commends the initiative of countries of West Africa and the Sahel to combat

terrorism through collective security efforts such as the Multinational Joint Task Force and the Joint Force of the Group of Five (G-5) for the Sahel. Such initiatives should receive all the necessary support. Indonesia welcomes the expansion of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali's support to all contingents of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force under resolution 2480 (2019). We hope that it will contribute to the achievement of tangible results in the operations of the Joint Force. We must note, however, that the collective endeavours should be complemented by national efforts to tackle terrorism. In this regard, we believe that it is of utmost importance to strengthen State presence and institutions, including police and judicial institutions.

Secondly, it is crucial to address the root causes of insecurity. A security approach is not a panacea for insecurity in the region. There are many advances necessary to ensure the alleviation of the humanitarian situation, reconstruction and economic and social development. Local grievances must also be addressed to prevent the expansion of violent extremism. International partners should continue to support the implementation of the stabilization strategy for countries affected by Boko Haram; the G-5 Sahel priority investment plan, the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel. These are important in order to build a resilient society through inclusive social and economic development.

Thirdly, it is necessary to adopt region-wide approaches to conflict resolution and management. The proximity of countries, the cross-border activity of extremist groups and other factors raise the possibility of a spillover of insecurity in the region. That must be countered with greater cooperation among countries in West Africa and the Sahel. Various United Nations agencies should enhance their synergies and support to regional and subregional organizations. In that regard, Indonesia welcomes the upcoming Economic Community of West African States special summit on terrorism, which will take place in September. Such joint efforts could be more focused on preventing the resurgence of violence and conflict in the region. That is vital to ensuring that many hard-won gains translate to lasting peace and prosperity in West Africa and the Sahel.

**Mr. Hickey** (United Kingdom): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Chabas for his briefing.

I too can be quick because, as the German Ambassador said, there is a good degree of consensus in the Council on today's topic. I agree with the points made by almost everyone here today. Let me just highlight three issues.

First, concerning the elections, we very much endorse the Special Representative's assessment of the recent elections in West Africa and welcome all the good work he has been doing to support those elections. The United Kingdom believes that inclusive democratic processes are critical, not just for international peace and security, but also for creating an enabling environment for investments and, more broadly, sustainable development. It is absolutely vital that all authorities and international partners work together to ensure that future elections in the region are timely, peaceful and credible.

Secondly, the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/549) highlights the devastating effect that the deteriorating security situation in north-east Nigeria is having on the people of the Lake Chad basin region. It is a region that is often overlooked by the Council, particularly in recent years. The United Kingdom is discussing with the Nigerian Government what more the international community can do to help it tackle the crisis. Clearly, extending State authority into so-called ungoverned spaces will be essential in order to stem the advances of Boko Haram. We welcome the efforts of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel to date and encourage further support to Governments in the region to tackle the crisis and implement resolution 2349 (2017), on the Lake Chad basin region.

Thirdly and finally, turning now to the Sahel, which, of course, remains a major concern for all of us on the Council, I am pleased to say that the Government of the United Kingdom has announced this week that it will make a future commitment of 250 troops to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. However, we must all do more to help address the root causes of the situation in the Sahel. As we heard during our recent visit to the Sahel, that includes reducing abuses by security forces, helping Governments provide basic services and mitigating the conflict over resources by helping people to adapt to climate change. It is a good thing that the Council

has become more focused on the link between climate change and conflict in recent months.

I also agree with my Chinese colleague who said that we need to make better use of international coordination mechanisms on the Sahel. We should be using the Council, the Sahel Alliance and the Lake Chad Basin Commission to make sure that the international community and our partners in the Sahel work effectively together to address the long-term drivers of instability and poverty.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Peru.

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Chambas for his useful briefing on the situation in West Africa and the Sahel. We welcome the progress he shared with us, in particular the contribution made by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) to elections in Benin, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal, and improvements in gender equality in the region. However, we are concerned about the fact that insecurity and the humanitarian situation have deteriorated in some countries. The actions of terrorist groups, transnational organized crime, clashes over the control of natural resources and inadequate State presence are ever-present challenges, in particular in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin region. In that regard, we would like to highlight the work of UNOWAS in three main areas.

First, in the area of conflict prevention, the good offices of and preventive diplomacy demonstrated by UNOWAS will be vital in the upcoming electoral processes in the region, in particular through support for inclusive dialogue and the strengthening of national capacities in order to allow for transparent, inclusive elections that foster the political participation of women and young people. UNOWAS has also proved to be a central actor in pre- and post-election environments, helping to ease tensions and prevent the emergence or deterioration of political crises by developing early-warning capabilities.

Secondly, with regard to promoting development, we highlight the fact that UNOWAS has prioritized the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, in line with national and regional needs and priorities. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund also conduct crucial activities in that regard, all in an effort to help address governance and justice gaps, poverty, exclusion and marginalization and combat the root causes of conflict. We also highlight the attention that UNOWAS pays to intercommunal conflicts between pastoralists and farmers as a result of the effects of climate change, and to the promotion of women's access to high-level Government positions in West Africa and the Sahel.

Thirdly, with respect to regional cooperation, we believe that cross-border cooperation and the creation of subregional synergies are key to improving security in the region, in particular when addressing the threat of terrorism, violent extremism and organized crime, as well as their respective linkages. We welcome the close cooperation among UNOWAS and the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, the Economic Community of West African States, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the African Union, which help ensure a complementary approach to those scourges. We stress UNOWAS support for security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants and the promotion of dialogue at the local level, as well as its collaboration with the Group of Five for the Sahel.

I would like to end by expressing our strong support for the role played by UNOWAS and encourage the international community to continue to cooperate closely with its efforts to achieve lasting peace in West Africa and the Sahel.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

*The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.*