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STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. MR. NEVILLE GERTZE
AMBASSADOR & PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE**

**ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA: THE
CENTRALITY OF PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY,
CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION**

7 OCTOBER 2019

Mr. President,

1. Since I am taking the floor for the first time this month, I join colleagues in congratulating you, for assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. I further wish to express our appreciation to you for convening this very important meeting on the centrality of preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.
2. I further would like to thank the Secretary-General and our briefers for their comprehensive, insightful and detailed briefing on the issue at hand.

Mr. President,

3. Upon its establishment in 1945, the Security Council was charged with ensuring international peace and security. Since then, Council Members have authorized numerous peacekeeping missions, including in Timor-Leste, Lebanon, Haiti, Cyprus and my own country Namibia. The Namibian experience is proof that these missions are designed to help countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. Next year, we will celebrate 30 years of this treasured peace in Namibia and we thank the United Nations for its role in bringing that peace to my country. The implementation of Council resolutions is also key to solving conflicts. I take this opportunity to remind that unresolved issues require the full support of the Security Council to ensure full implementation of these Council resolutions.
4. Since the creation of the Security Council, the nature of conflicts have changed. Therefore, the role of the Council must also adapt. The Council must at all times guard against no being simply reactive. It must be proactive. It must play a stronger role in preventing wars and conflicts from occurring. Misery, human suffering, starvation, intolerable living conditions, human rights abuses are amongst the early warning signals that we must all look out for. Succeeding in this requires strong cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations, who are more familiar and in tune with situations in their respective regions. Mr. President I want to add also that we must focus on external factors as well, such as climate change and food insecurity. These are early warning signals of problems to come as far as peace and security is concerned.

Mr. President,

5. The signing in April 2017 of the *Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security*, provides “guidance for deepening cooperation between the two organizations at all levels in peace and security”. Since then, this vital partnership has gone from strength to strengthen. In this regard, Namibia firmly supports the call by the AU and the

African Members of the Security Council for predictable financing for AU-led Peace Support Operations authorized by the Security Council through UN assessed contributions.

6. The strengthening of the UN-AU partnership has been concretely demonstrated in recent months, with the signing of peace agreements in the Central African Republic and South Sudan notably. Sudan is also an excellent example of the power of preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution. The upcoming Security Council visit to the African Union Headquarters, where consultations will be held with the AU Peace and Security Council, also demonstrates the importance of the UN-AU partnership.

Mr. President,

7. During Namibia's chairmanship of SADC from August 2018 to August 2019, the need to prioritize preventive diplomacy and mediation in approaching crises and conflict situations was continuously emphasized. Concrete examples of this policy were the successful and peaceful elections held in both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Madagascar. SADC has been assisting in finding a political solution in Lesotho and we are optimistic that through dialogue, that sisterly country is moving in the right direction. SADC is in full support of the need to enhance the AU's prevention capabilities and tools, in the context of the AU's aspiration of "*Silencing the Guns by 2020*". We cannot overemphasize preventative diplomacy, mediation and negotiations in peacebuilding and reconstruction.

Mr. President,

8. I also wish to emphasize the importance of women negotiators and mediators in peacebuilding processes as espoused in the AU Agenda 2063. It was in 2000, during Namibia's presidency of the UN Security Council, that the Council unanimously adopted the landmark UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. This resolution formally drew global attention to the unrecognized, underutilized and under-valued contributions of women in preventative war, peace building and engaging individuals and societies to live in harmony. According to the International Peace Institute, when women participate in peace process, the resulting agreement is 35% more likely to last at least 15 years. This number alone should encourage parties to ensure that women must be part of the conversation. We as an international community can only benefit by recognizing the fundamental role of women in peace and security. Towards this end, Namibia will be launching an International Women's Peace Center and we welcome commitments by other Member States on concrete deliverables in the coming years, such as Commitment 2025 on women's inclusion in peace processes by Finland and Spain.

Mr. President,

9. To conclude, I would like to underscore Namibia's commitment to preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution. My delegation further recognizes the ongoing peace efforts on the continent and we commend the efforts of the UN and the AU, as well as sub-regional organizations and regional economic commissions. We firmly believe that taking a more proactive approach, by using preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention will bring an end to violence on the African continent. As our founding father in Namibia one said, "A people united, striving to achieve a common good for all members of society will always emerge victorious". In making this wisdom relevant, I believe the Council would see much more success.

I thank you.