

Statement by Botswana at the Open Debate of the United Nations Security Council

Conflict Prevention
21 August 2014
(Unofficial Transcript)

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): Allow me to join other delegations in expressing our congratulations to the United Kingdom on its assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of August. I also wish to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, for taking the initiative to convene this important debate on the maintenance of international peace and security. We also welcome the resolution that has been adopted unanimously by the Council on this subject (resolution 2171 (2014)).

My delegation wishes to align itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Similarly, my delegation aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Republic of Zimbabwe on behalf of the Southern African Development Community.

This debate could not have come at a better time, as it takes place against the backdrop of violent conflict and bloodshed in many parts of the world, from the Middle East to Eastern Europe and Africa. We are witnessing increasing trends of regional instability and insecurity, which are posing serious threats to international peace and security. The hard reality of such circumstances is that no one country is ever truly immune from the direct or spillover effects of conflict. It is therefore an absolute imperative that the international community act in unison and make concerted efforts to comprehensively address those threats in order to create a world that is safer, secure and prosperous for the benefit of both present and future generations of humankind.

It is a fact that the Security Council has a vital role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security, as part of its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations, specifically under Article 24. However, it is also a fact that the effectiveness of that role can be legitimately questioned at times when the Council fails to act swiftly or decisively. Thousands of innocent lives continue to be lost and humanitarian crises reach catastrophic proportions, and the fundamental United Nations objective of safeguarding humankind is compromised by the selfish national interests of some Member States. We therefore urge the Council to definitively take on its responsibilities and intensify its efforts to fight the just battle. It should also ensure that commitments undertaken to respond to international security crises are met without conditions, in order to lessen the human cost.

Despite the Security Council's mandated responsibilities, the burden of responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security does not lie solely with it. Each region and each nation State and its citizens has an important role to play in that regard. It is our duty to shield our citizenry from all forms of conflict that deprive them of their basic human rights and livelihoods. It is also our responsibility to protect them from crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes and crimes of aggression. In that connection, Botswana remains steadfast in its commitment to the principles of democracy, accountable and inclusive governance, the rule of law and the promotion and protection of human rights for all. We continue to strongly support action against impunity as well as the strengthening of institutions of accountability at the national and international levels.

The uncontrolled movement of small arms and light weapons within and across borders also remains a cause for our collective concern. Their presence, illegal transfer and continued use create tensions in communities, often resulting in the eruption of conflict in one form or another. The highly destabilizing effect of such weapons therefore impels us, as responsible members of the international community, to exercise great vigilance in controlling their stockpiles and committing ourselves to ending their illegal trade.

One of the greatest threats to international peace and security is the continued use and

indiscriminate testing by some countries of nuclear weapons. Until such time as those weapons have been completely destroyed, humankind's very existence remains in peril. Needless to say, guaranteeing the preservation of our planet and the human race compels responsible action not only on the part of those who possess nuclear weapons but by all who desire a stable, peaceful and secure world.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Botswana's commitment to playing its part and to giving unwavering support to the international community's efforts to promote and protect international peace and security.