

Speech: A Sustainable Peace Approach to the Lake Chad Region

Thank you Mr President.

I would like to thank you and your delegation for organising this briefing and for giving us the opportunity to discuss the situation in the Lake Chad Basin one year after we visited the region and adopted Resolution 2349, which was unique in its comprehensive approach integrating development, human rights and security.

I would also like to thank our briefers for their reflections on the humanitarian and security situation and for their suggestions on next steps to address the root causes of the conflict. They've already made a number of concrete proposals and I hope careful note has been taken by the Secretariat. We look forward to discussing some of these ideas later with other Member States.

Mr President,

The security situation in the Lake Chad Basin continues to be of great concern. On 2 March, this Council condemned the attack on humanitarian workers in Rann, and the attack on Dapchi in which a large number of schoolgirls were abducted.

The humanitarian crisis remains as dire as when we visited the region a year ago. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance remains at 10.7 million and 5.8 million people are now experiencing severe food insecurity. We call upon donors to keep up the momentum of the response, including fulfilling the financial requirement of \$1.6 billion for 2018. And we call on all parties to the conflict to grant safe, timely and unimpeded access to humanitarian organisations in line with International Humanitarian Law.

From the humanitarian and security situation, it is clear that the international community, and this Security Council, must remain fully engaged in this crisis. On 21 March, the United Kingdom opened a diplomatic office in Chad to facilitate efforts to stabilise the region and address the root causes of insecurity.

Mr President, we welcome the steps taken by the governments of the region, through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), to tackle the terrorist threat. And I welcome today the presence of the distinguished representative of Nigeria around our table. I take the opportunity to acknowledge his country's determination and leadership in fighting terrorism, and to salute the partnership that the United Kingdom and Nigeria have formed on this and other vital issues.

Although the military approach has an important role to play in stabilising the region, the solution to this crisis cannot be solely military. As

recognised by Resolution 2349, to achieve sustainable peace, it is vital that the root causes of regional instability are understood and addressed, including poverty, climate change, inequality and violent extremism.

We recognise ongoing efforts of the countries of the region, including Nigeria, both individually and jointly through Lake Chad Basin Commission, towards the achievement of this aim. We need to see regional governments demonstrate stronger leadership, in particular on demobilisation, de-radicalisation and reintegration of former combatants.

The international community, and we in the United Nations, must support these efforts through robust strategies on prevention and sustaining peace. The Deputy Secretary-General has shown great leadership in bringing together the diffuse activities of many UN development agencies in the Sahel strategy, linked to wider security efforts. And we need to apply those lessons and that approach to the Lake Chad Basin region.

Special Political Missions, in particular, UNOCA and UNOWAS, must work to ensure their efforts are coherent and that regional strategies are mutually supportive. And I fully agree with the Representative of the Lake Chad Basin Commission that a comprehensive analysis should be included in UNOCA and UNOWAS's future briefings to this Council.

The United Nations' strategy must be based on accurate information so future crises can be predicted, and this Council, the UN and regional governments can take preventative action, in line with the Secretary General's own focus on prevention.

And on this World Water Day, let us remember that climate and ecological changes are a major root cause of this conflict. If we want to build sustainable peace and promote sustainable development, we must support efforts to build livelihoods that are resistant to climate change, including through adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies.

It is also vital that the UN and regional governments take the particular concerns of women and children into account in stabilisation, conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts, in accordance with Resolution 1325. The United Nations could support this through a stronger, more consistent in-country presence.

Mr President,

As the UK's Representative said when we adopted resolution 2349, "We will fail the people of the region if we do not respond to what we saw." When we travelled to the region, we saw the root causes and the serious consequences of this conflict. And we must respond.

The Lake Chad Basin is a region that requires a sustaining peace approach and we encourage the Secretary-General to demonstrate the UN's support by visiting the region as set out in resolution 2349.

Thank you Mr President.