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STATEMENT BY

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United Nations Security Council High Level Open Debate

"Peace through Dialogue: the Contribution of Regional, Sub-regional and Bilateral Arrangements to the Prevention and Peaceful Resolution of Disputes"

20 October 2023 (AM)
Security Council Chamber
United Nations
New York

Mr. President,

1. Ghana is grateful to Brazil for spotlighting, during this open debate of your presidency, the importance of pacific tools in preventing and resolving disputes.
2. We thank ASG Khaled Khiari for his briefing as well as the remarks of Their Excellencies Michelle Bachelet and Thabo Mbeki which highlighted the need for greater resort to the tools of pacific settlement at the national, regional and international levels.
3. We equally note the perspectives of Ms. Josephina Alvarez and in particular the reminder to us that civil society groups can make meaningful contributions in national and local consciousness about the significant role that peaceful dispute resolution plays in stabilizing societies.

Mr. President,

4. As indicated in your concept note for this meeting, the benefits of pacific tools in preventing and resolving conflicts at the national, regional and international levels are many. Yet, as ironic as it may seem, we have often not resorted to their use as the first option, even though in national mechanisms, regional protocols and international treaties, including the Charter of this Organisation, many

provisions abound, anticipating that interactions within, between and among States are likely to create disputes.

5. We therefore believe that the challenge, including for this Council, is how we can shift our collective will at this present time, away from measures that require force towards means that are peaceful. In saying so, we are mindful of the sense some States hold that resorting to peaceful means would not always produce the outcomes they desire, or that the results they seek from such a means would be swift and without delay. However, it is quite evident, especially in matters of peace and security, that pacific means have usually been just and have had enduring outcomes.

6. We therefore encourage all Member States and, the Council in particular, to deepen the utilization of the provisions of Chapter VI of the UN Charter in dealing with the many disputes we are presently confronted with. As a Council, and among all Member States, we should seize the opportunity of the Secretary-General's policy brief on the New Agenda for Peace to re-think our approach to conflict prevention, management and resolution, and embrace, even more, the pacific approaches, which are time tested and have proven to be sustainable in maintaining peace.

Mr. President,

7. In response to the guiding question that your concept note raised, we believe that there is no better way for enhancing the use of Chapter VI of the Charter of this Organisation than simply doing so – enhancing its use. We need, as Member States, to recommit to the various peaceful methods for settling disputes and, as a Council, we should be bold in exercising our mandate in calling on disputing parties to settle by peaceful means, and to follow through our call with strong facilitative support.

8. In so saying, it is important that we strengthen the Secretary-General's dedicated capacity within the United Nations to support disputing States, such as would help them to have greater confidence in the peace support architecture of this Organisation. We acknowledge, in this context, the Secretary-General's Good Offices and the work of UN Mediation, including the Mediation Advisory Board and the Standby Mediation Advisers who remain critical to the preventive diplomacy agenda. We urge the interlocking of these mediation capacities with those of regional arrangements in ways that can leverage regional knowledge and experience with the global resources of the UN to reinforce the impact of the pacific tools.

9. The experience of many regional arrangements, including those in Africa, demonstrate a rich array of useful preventive and conflict resolution mechanisms such as the ECOWAS and African Union Early Warning Systems, the African Union Panel of the Wise or SADCs Panel of Elders, and other ad hoc mechanisms that are deployed to defuse tensions, elicit commitment to peaceful settlement and/or resolve disputes. While most of these preventive mechanisms remain largely effective, the gap between intentions and impact still require some bridging, to reduce instances where disputes that have been flagged get out of control and become violent. Additional resources in support of the effective functioning of such mechanisms could therefore be useful to enable them to respond in a timely and effective manner on behalf of the international system as envisaged in Chapter VIII of the Charter.

10. To improve the Security Council's cooperation with regional, sub-regional and bilateral arrangements, we encourage, besides focused field visits by the Council, periodic informal interactive dialogues with such arrangements that are making exceptional contributions to the peaceful settlement of disputes. Such dialogues should aim to explore how the unique strengths and successful experiences of the arrangements could be adapted and replicated in cross-regional contexts to support the resolution of other disputes on the agenda of the Council. The

Colombia Peace Process and the Mixed Commission experiences are worthy examples.

11. Before concluding, and while welcoming the Secretary-General's emphasis on preventive diplomacy in his New Agenda for Peace, we underscore the saliency in mobilizing support to address governance and development deficits which lie at the root of many of the intra-State crises we are witnessing. Investing in people, including women and the youth, enhances their resilience against complex challenges and helps to build and sustain peace, break the cycles of instability and reverse the drivers of fragility. Equally important, we need to encourage different nations to embrace all of their society, including their community and religious leaders whose native wisdom has often proven beneficial in resolving many conflicts.

12. Finally, the emphasis being placed in the present circumstances on preventive diplomacy and the "need for strong partnerships between the UN and regional organizations" is the right one. Underpinned by a strong recommitment to international law, it should strengthen our collective resolve in championing the pacific route in addressing the myriad of crises of our time. For those of us from the continent of Africa, this approach also represents one of the surest ways

of silencing the guns by 2030 and achieving a peaceful and prosperous continent. In looking at all the emerging challenges across the world at the present moment, time is not on our side and we must take action to turbo-charge the use of pacific settlements in preventing disputes and resolving them.

13. I thank you.