



**PERMANENT MISSION**  
**OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**  
**TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Remarks**

**by**

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**Permanent Representative of Slovakia  
to the United Nations**

**at the**

**UN Security Council Open Debate**

**on**

***Peace and Security in Africa: Addressing Root Causes of Conflict while  
Promoting Post-Pandemic Recovery in Africa***

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Mr. Chair,

First of all, I would like to thank the Chinese Presidency of the United Nations Security Council for organizing this timely open debate that could generate more focused attention on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on conflict-affected countries in Africa as well as on the various challenges faced by the vulnerable countries and populations on the African continent. Slovakia associates itself with the statement of the European Union. Allow me to make a few additional observations.

Mr. Chair,

This is a critical time for African countries affected by conflict. The challenges they face have been multiplied by COVID-19. Many countries and regions are confronted with escalating humanitarian crises, high levels of displacement, food shortages, and collapsing economies. Direct and secondary consequences of the pandemic interacting with existing security and humanitarian crises are adding another layer of complexity to already fragile situations. Overall, this pandemic risks setting these countries even further behind in attaining the SDGs.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global crisis that requires a multilateral response. Solidarity and close cooperation are crucial. Rapid, safe and fair access to healthcare and vaccinations for all is an investment in health, as well as an investment in peace and security. To win the battle against this pandemic, vaccines and health security should be accessible to all across the globe. I would like to underline the fact, that the EU played a leading role in setting up the COVAX Facility, considering it the best vehicle for delivering on international vaccine solidarity, including to African countries.

Mr. Chair,

While dealing with the menace of the pandemic, maintaining peace and security in Africa remains paramount. Despite increased peacebuilding efforts in recent decades, violence and conflict, at times exacerbated by terrorism and the spread of violent extremism, transnational organized crime,

and weak institutions, continue to pose a challenge in some areas and will inevitably complicate efforts to tackle the consequences of the pandemic.

In this context, we need to ensure predictable and sustained financing of the UN peacebuilding activities at a time when the impact of the multifaceted crises posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in African conflict-affected countries is so significant and the work of the UN, including in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, has become more challenging. The UN system and relevant actors have to stay the course in their support to peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts.

At the same time, Slovakia is convinced that the security sector is a key component in government response to various challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic in fragile African countries and regions. Reviews of existing mandates of the UN missions in countries facing complex challenges must consider the existence of exit strategies that seek to help lay the foundations for the long-term and sustainable peace.

For years Slovakia has identified SSR to be one of the key elements for effective conflict prevention and successful post-conflict rebuilding and stabilization. The direct experience from many UN peace missions and operations including in African countries clearly shows that a nationally-led and inclusive SSR is a key to developing security sector institutions that are capable of effectively responding to the specific security needs and can actively manage drivers of fragility.

Mr. Chair,

The UN Security Council can play an important role in helping the international community focus on those who are affected by conflict and insecurity and have been disproportionately hit by the pandemic. This includes bringing attention to the devastating effects that the pandemic has on people in fragile settings, and remaining open to consider the role that peace operations can play in this context.

I thank you.