



Security Council Open Debate on ‘Strengthening the role of the African State in addressing global security and development challenges’, 23 May 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt

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President

I begin by thanking Mozambique for convening this open debate on such an important issue. I also thank the Secretary-General and the briefers for sharing their valuable insights. As the world grapples with significant challenges like climate change, rising authoritarianism, gender inequality, violent extremism, and harmful influences from bad actors, the foundations of peace, democracy, and human security are under threat, including in Africa.

In this regard, Malta firmly believes in the mutually reinforcing relationship between stability, security, effective democracy, governance, human rights and sustainable development. This forms the foundation of any country and its meaningful engagement on the global stage.



After experiencing challenging times in its development in previous decades, Africa is now undergoing rapid growth and holds immense potential. With an increasingly young population and diverse cultural and geographic contexts, Africa is the continent of the future.

At the same time, instances of terrorism, violent extremism, and the rise of unconstitutional changes in government, particularly in West Africa remain causes for concern. These happenings not only inflict severe suffering on civilians, but also steal their futures and squander entire generations. Silencing the guns remains as important as ever. Climate change compounds these hardships, underlining the urgency of strengthening state institutions, which are fundamental pillars in ensuring democratic and peaceful societies.

While on the subject, Malta wishes to encourage the ratification and implementation of all relevant international and regional instruments and commitments related to the protection of conflict-affected children and to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.



President

The remarkable work carried out by several UN peace-support missions, as well as the African Union, deserves our attention.

In South Sudan, UNMISS has supported the Joint Special Mobile Court for Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap States by increasing complementarity between formal and customary justice actors and strengthening accountability for inter-communal violence, as well as sexual-and gender-based violence.

In Somalia, UNSOM has supported alternative dispute mechanisms, useful in addressing cases for specific populations, while ATMIS has been instrumental in assisting Somalia in its security transition, supporting national forces in combating Al-Shabaab.

In Central African Republic, MINUSCA supports national authorities and local-level institutions to strengthen the complementarity and coordination between formal and informal justice actors.



Resolution 2719 on UN-assessed contributions for AU-led Peace Support Operations underscores the Council's landmark support to the complementarity of regional configurations to security in Africa. We also recognise the contributions of sub-regional efforts, including through ECOWAS, IGAD, EAC, SADC and IGCLR.

Furthermore, we remain inspired by the determination and courage of many young persons and women in the region, actively engaged in overcoming divisions and fostering peace.

The full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation of women and young people is indispensable for any state- and peace-building process. Their voices must be heard, and they must have a place at all negotiation tables. Ensuring access to quality education remains crucial in narrowing the development gap. As indicated earlier, this must be accompanied by strategic policies for climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the use of renewable resources.



We also welcome the impressive technological leapfrog throughout the African continent where the potential of digital technologies is translating into innovation that enhances resilience and serves as a tool for inclusive progress now and in the future.

Partnerships have the potential to uplift entire communities from financial poverty and reintegrate them into decision-making process. This is the ethos behind Malta's Strategy for Africa. Launched in 2020, the strategy has enhanced business-to-business contact with enterprises in Africa, while sharing best development practices, and pursuing a wider diplomatic strategy. These efforts complement the EU's Global Gateway Initiative which sees at least 150 billion euros invested in key sectors.

To conclude, President, today's discussions provide a fitting moment to reflect on the progress achieved by the 'African State' through local, national, regional, and international cooperation.

This Council must ensure that this progress is not compromised by threats to its own stability and security. Investing in Africa's future generations has therefore become an immediate necessity.



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I thank you.