



G7 FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING

LUCCA, 10-11 APRIL 2017

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

We, the Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the High Representative of the European Union, have gathered in Lucca, Italy on 10-11 April to address a number of major international issues that impact global peace and security.

We share and are firmly committed to common principles of democracy, protection and promotion of human rights and the rule of law. As a group of Nations, we stand united to face jointly the most pressing challenges of a rapidly evolving international environment affecting on a multidimensional level our interests and our security. We recognize the need to adapt with flexibility to such a changing environment and we are determined to coordinate our efforts in promoting the rules-based international order, tackling terrorism and violent extremism, promote stability, inclusion and prosperity, and to support the efforts of third Countries sharing our own objectives.

In addition to exchanging views and coordinating actions as set out below, we adopted the Declaration on Responsible States Behaviour in Cyberspace and endorsed the G7 Statement on Non-proliferation and Disarmament.

COUNTERING TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

We reiterate our strong condemnation of acts of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We express our deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and the Governments of those affected.

Countering terrorism and violent extremism and bringing perpetrators to justice remain top priorities for the international community. Holding perpetrators accountable for their actions not only is crucial for victims, it also helps to prevent terrorism and sends a strong message that violence is an unacceptable response to political or ideological grievances. Standing united in our efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism, our response will remain grounded in our shared system of values and norms. The principles on which our societies are built remain the first and best defence against this common threat: in countering terrorism and violent extremism, we will continue to uphold respect for human rights, promote fundamental freedoms and foster a culture of inclusion and gender equality as cornerstones of our concerted action. We reaffirm our commitment to promoting peaceful co-existence, respect for diversity, respect for dignity of women and girls, tolerance and inclusive dialogue as fundamental to preventing the emergence and spread of violent extremism, in all its forms.

International cooperation remains of paramount importance in the fight against terrorism: we will continue to support the full implementation of all relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and relevant international instruments, as well as the recent efforts aimed at addressing the links between terrorism and transnational organized crime that finance terrorism and undermine our security and economic growth. We will continue to support the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (PVE) to ensure countries are equipped with the strategies, expertise and tools they need to address this challenge.

We follow closely the ongoing UN Counter-terrorism architecture reform efforts, and welcome the proposal of the Secretary-General envisaging the creation of a new Under Secretary-General position to lead a new UN Office of Counter-terrorism. We look forward to the new Office taking a leading role in implementing all four pillars of the UN's Global Counter-terrorism Strategy, including institutionalizing PVE across the UN system, while fostering cooperation with international and regional organizations, ensuring better coherence and co-ordination and de-conflicting current duplications of effort. We support a transparent approach to this process. As founding members, we continue to support the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), as well as the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), the Hedayah

Centre and the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ) in their CT and CVE activities.

Partnership with third countries remains a priority: we remain alert to the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters returning to their countries of origin, moving to other ungoverned spaces, or seeking to destabilize States by exploiting existing social or political grievances, and/or connecting with criminal networks. We will enhance cooperation in monitoring cross-border movements of returning foreign terrorist fighters, in exchanging information and evidence, in partnering with countries in the Middle East, Central Asia, North Africa, the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, South Eastern Europe, East, South east and South Asia, also with a view to preventing the planning of terrorist attacks, and countering the violent messages terrorists spread in their propaganda. We will seek wherever possible to prosecute individuals for offences committed, but we are also committed to supporting activities aimed at reducing the risks posed by foreign terrorist fighters and family members returning from conflict zones, including, when appropriate, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts, as well as activities that strengthen community resilience to violent extremism.

We believe that preventing radicalization to violence and violent extremism requires an effort to address the conditions conducive to their spread, both within and outside our own societies. A whole of society approach is critical to achieving our goals. We will therefore continue to seek the widest degree of engagement with civil society representatives, local communities, youth and religious leaders, women, detention facilities, educational institutions and the private sector to build effective community-level responses to counter violent extremism.

We aim not only to counter the narratives supporting terrorism and violent extremism and to expose the fallacy of ISIL/Da'esh's and other groups' propaganda, but also to build an alternative and positive narrative, promoting a world-view based on our common values and on the active, constructive and integrated participation in open and inclusive societies that respect diversity and equal citizenship.

We remain committed to playing a key role in countering terrorist financing, including funds stemming from kidnap for ransom and organised crime, supporting full implementation of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and relevant international instruments, including the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), and actively participating in the main fora and international initiatives on these issues. In this regard, we welcome Japan's ongoing effort to become a State Party of UNTOC. We will continue to integrate international multilateral efforts into

national actions in order to foster coordination and effectiveness in disrupting the sources of financial flows generated by individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with terrorism or providing terrorism with any form of support.

Continued engagement with the private sector, civil society, academia, and other groups is also a key element. We acknowledge the important role of civil society, social media companies, and Communications Service Providers in helping voluntarily to identify and remove content aimed at spreading propaganda for terrorism and violent extremism. We encourage them to continue to facilitate the implementation of legitimate removal requests by updating and improving their general conditions of use and continuing to strengthen their approach by developing technological solutions to addressing violent extremism online.

The growing use of end-to-end encrypted communication services puts content out of reach of law enforcement and security and intelligence agencies. We will engage industry and wider partners to find a solution that permits governments to obtain lawfully and on a systematic basis, at the request of competent authorities, critical data and contents. This will be done in a way that protects the right to privacy and the human rights of vulnerable users while also facilitating criminal investigations and ensuring that there are no safe spaces where terrorists can communicate online.

As we commit to fighting the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes, we will spare no efforts in defending freedom of speech and the free and equitable access to the Internet.

We will also continue to seek to enhance cooperation between law enforcement and criminal justice authorities, as well as partnership with the private sector and civil society in fighting transnational organized crime, particularly that which directly or indirectly supports or facilitates terrorism, including illicit smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, drugs, wildlife, firearms, and other weapons. We also emphasize the important role of law enforcement and criminal justice authorities, the private sector and civil society in countering the smuggling of antiquities and of cultural heritage - particularly that conducted by terrorist groups as a means of financing terrorist activities, and of eradicating cultural diversity in conflict zones.

We welcome the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2347, which underlines the importance of investigations; cooperation and exchange of information in countering the trafficking in cultural property by terrorist and organized criminal groups; and engagement with museums, relevant business associations, and antiquities market participants.

We reiterate our determination to implement fully the G7 Action Plan on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism adopted at the G7 Ise-Shima Summit.

We will enhance our efforts, individually and collectively, to promote better implementation of effective aviation security measures, both through ICAO and through direct action with other states where necessary in order to protect the safety of our citizens.

Finally, we encourage the G7 Roma-Lyon Group to continue work on issues related to border and aviation security, enhancing priority countries' connectivity to INTERPOL Databases and all other areas of cooperation relevant to countering terrorism.

ISIL - DA'ESH / SYRIA / IRAQ

In the framework of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL/Da'esh, within International and Regional Organizations and through national and bilateral efforts, we have made significant progress in reducing ISIL/Da'esh's presence in Syria and Iraq, stabilizing areas freed from ISIL/Da'esh control in Iraq, curbing the flow of foreign terrorist fighters to conflict zones, degrading ISIL/Da'esh's access to resources and countering its brutal propaganda. We commend the cohesion and outcomes of the Global Coalition and call for further commitment from all its members to achieve the final objective of destroying ISIL/Da'esh. We commit to continuing these efforts in order to complete the liberation of ISIL/Da'esh-held territories, in particular Raqqa and Mosul, and put an end to violence, widespread and gross violations and abuses of human rights and violations of humanitarian law, perpetrated by ISIL/Da'esh, all in the pursuit of finally destroying it.

We reiterate our strongest condemnation of these crimes and abuses, including against people belonging to religious and ethnic minorities. There must be accountability for all crimes committed by ISIL/Da'esh in Iraq, Syria and beyond, including the most serious crimes of international concern, and as such, we stand ready to support efforts to hold perpetrators to account.

We are determined to defeat ISIL/Da'esh in Iraq and Syria. We will work with local partners to ensure ISIL/Da'esh and other terrorist entities do not re-emerge in the area. To this end we call for inclusive reform and reconciliation in Iraq and a genuine political transition based on the 2012 Geneva Communiqué and the UN Security Council Resolution 2254 in Syria, as well as for humanitarian assistance, the immediate stabilization of the areas liberated from ISIL/Da'esh, supporting governance in areas held by the opposition in Syria,

ensuring rehabilitation of public services, the rule of law and the safe, voluntary and sustainable return of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). We reiterate the importance of preserving the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-confessional character of the Syrian and Iraqi societies.

We also recognise the threat posed by ISIL/Da'esh branches and covert networks outside of Iraq and Syria to regional stability and security. We recognize that more needs to be done to tackle ISIL/Da'esh, including its online messaging, throughout the world to ensure that ISIL/Da'esh is not able to take advantage of, or expand in, ungoverned or unstable territories.

SYRIA

Six years into the Syrian war, the Syrian people have endured the most tremendous suffering, and no efforts should be spared to bring this conflict to an end.

We express grave concern at continuing violence and the lack of humanitarian access. We call upon all parties, in particular the regime and its backers, including Russia and Iran, to allow sustainable, unhindered and adequate humanitarian assistance to all people in need.

We welcomed international efforts aimed at establishing a nationwide ceasefire, including the Russia and Turkey-brokered ceasefire, announced on 29 December 2016. While noting the Joint statement by Iran, Russia and Turkey at the International meeting on Syria held in Astana on 23-24 January and of the following meetings in the Kazak capital, we urge them to live up to their commitments and to use their influence on the parties to observe and ensure full compliance with the ceasefire, reduce violence, build confidence, ensure unhindered humanitarian access and the protection and free movement of civilians.

In this regard, we express our grave concern at the constant violations of the ceasefire, committed primarily by the Syrian regime and its allies. Despite Syrian regime's claims, this activity does not target primarily UN-designated terrorist groups.

We urgently call on all parties to implement immediately and fully relevant UN Security Council Resolutions demanding rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to people in need throughout Syria. We condemn the perpetuation of sieges throughout the country, the starving and bombing of civilians, the numerous attacks on medical facilities and personnel and breaches of international humanitarian law by all parties, notably by the regime.

We commend and support the UN Special Envoy's efforts to convene an inclusive and credible political process in Geneva to negotiate a political transition in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2254 and the Geneva Communiqué. We underline that intra-Syrian discussions on political issues should be under the aegis of the United Nations and in line with the roadmap and the objectives outlined by UN Security Council Resolution 2254.

We reiterate the importance of strong and continuous support of the members of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) to the UN-brokered political dialogue in Geneva, with a view to moving forward with a credible and inclusive transitional governance, which represents the foundation of any meaningful and viable political solution in Syria. In this respect, we welcome the engagement of and reaffirm our firm support for the High Negotiations Committee (HNC) with a view to a credible political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and enables them to independently and democratically determine their own future. We call on all parties to engage meaningfully in the UN-led political negotiations. The regime in particular must finally show genuine engagement with the UN-led process so a peaceful and lasting solution to this dreadful conflict can be reached.

We reiterate our commitment to the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the Syrian State.

While reiterating our commitment to fighting terrorism in any form in Syria, in particular ISIL/Da'esh and al Qaeda, we underline that any effort to end to violent radicalization, extremism and terrorism needs to include a serious and genuine effort toward a peaceful political transition and reconciliation process.

We express grave concern at the continuing and alarming reports of the intense use of chemical weapons, including toxic chemicals as weapons, in Syria, and reiterate our strong support for the absolutely necessary work of the OPCW-UN mandated Joint Investigative Mechanism, which concluded that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces were responsible for the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in three instances and ISIL/Da'esh in the use of chemical weapons in one. We express our resolve to ensure that the use of chemical weapons remains a taboo. In this respect, we deplore the vetoes opposed to the UN Security Council draft resolution aimed at condemning and holding accountable those responsible of the appalling acts addressed in the report of the OPCW-UN mandated Joint Investigative Mechanism.

We are shocked and horrified by the reports of use of chemical weapons in an airstrike in the Khan Shaykhun area of southern Idlib on 4 April. Syria's possession of chemical weapons and their means of delivery are illegal under UN Security Council Resolution 2118 and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The subsequent US military action against Shayrat Airfield was a carefully calibrated, limited in scope response to this war crime and was directed against Syrian military targets directly connected to the 4th April chemical weapons attack in order to prevent and deter the proliferation and use of deadly chemical weapons in Syria.

We express full support to the OPCW Fact Finding Mission investigation and stress that if the Fact Finding Mission concludes that chemical weapons have or have likely been used, the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism should immediately carry out its investigation in accordance with its mandate to identify the perpetrators. We call upon the Syrian Arab Republic and all parties in Syria to cooperate fully with the OPCW to allow a prompt conclusion of its investigation on this heinous incident. We call on Russia and Iran, who have a responsibility, as allies of the Syrian regime, to use their influence to ensure Syria's compliance with all of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Unresolved gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in Syria's chemical weapons declarations, remain a matter of significant concern, and must be urgently addressed.

We believe that there is an opportunity to bring this tragic crisis to an end and we hope that all major partners will live up to their international responsibilities and seize this opportunity. Russia has the potential to help resolve the conflict and restore a stable and unified Syria, and defeat ISIL/Da'esh and terrorism. We urge Russia to work to promote a real and genuine political process in Syria, in accordance with the Geneva communiqué and UN Security Council Resolution 2254, and to use its influence with the regime to bring the conflict to an end, beginning with the enforcement of a real ceasefire and improved humanitarian access, and engage seriously in the UN led political process. If Russia is prepared to use its influence, then we are prepared to work with it in resolving the conflict in Syria, pursuing a political settlement and ultimately contributing to the costs of stabilization and reconstruction.

Accountability for gross and systematic violations perpetrated in Syria is paramount. Any inability to ensure accountability of perpetrators can result in additional brutality and continued flouting of international norms. We welcome the adoption by the UN General Assembly of a resolution establishing an international, impartial, independent investigative mechanism, with a view to holding accountable those responsible for massive violations and abuses of international human rights law committed in Syria. We take note with great concern of the most recent report of the Commission of Inquiry regarding the events in Aleppo, the attack on the UN-SARC humanitarian aid convoy and the

battle over Damascus' water supply. We reiterate the demand to the Syrian regime to allow safe, free and unhindered access of international observers to the country. All those responsible for such breaches of international law will be held accountable. We also underline the obligation to release all arbitrarily detained persons, especially women and children.

We welcome the outcome of the International Conference on "Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region", held in Brussels on 5 April, aimed at boosting international support for the intra-Syrian negotiations in Geneva, addressing the humanitarian crisis in Syria and to maintain the support to displaced Syrians and to the countries that are hosting Syrian refugees. While reaffirming the importance of the international support to the reconstruction of Syria, we reiterate that no step in such direction will be possible, until a credible political transition is firmly under way.

IRAQ

We reassert our continued support for the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq, whose stabilization and good governance remain central for the overall future of the region.

We recognize the bravery and sacrifice of the Iraqi forces in the military operations to defeat ISIL/Da'esh and to liberate Mosul, with the support of the Global Coalition, and the commitment of Prime Minister al-Abadi to minimize civilian casualties and put protection of civilians at the heart of the campaign. The fight against terrorism will only be successful if conducted in full respect of international human rights, preventing sectarian violence and defusing sectarian tensions. We welcome the agreement between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government on the division of tasks on the ground, that has allowed Iraqi Security Forces and Peshmerga units to fight together against ISIL/Da'esh. We hope this military cooperation can become a model for political cooperation in a post-Da'esh Iraq.

We continue to support strongly the efforts of the Iraqi authorities, the UN and the Global Coalition to address the immediate needs arising from the Mosul campaign and throughout Iraq. We are deeply concerned by the number of Iraqis who are still internally displaced or continue to be in need of humanitarian assistance, including medical and psycho-social services for survivors of gender-based violence. We call on donor countries to continue responding to the crisis by extending humanitarian assistance country-wide to reach people in need. We attach the highest priority to the stabilization of liberated areas, and we call on partners to support Iraq's efforts, in close cooperation with the UN and other international organizations, so that people

can return to their homes in a safe, voluntary manner in keeping with international human rights and humanitarian law, preserving the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-faith character of Iraqi society. In this context, the role of the Iraqi authorities, and above all of the police, as guarantor of security, public order and the rule of law for all community members, is of increasing strategic importance for the country's future.

We also underline the necessity that all armed groups come under the command and control of the Iraqi State. We call on the countries of the region to play a constructive role and support the Iraqi Government in its efforts to restore long-lasting peace and stability in Iraq.

We reiterate our full support to Prime Minister al-Abadi and strongly encourage the Government of Iraq to continue in its efforts to advance reconciliation at national and local level and the implementation of political and economic reforms. We consider that an Iraqi-led political process, with the participation of all Iraqis regardless of their origin, ethnicity or belief, is an essential step towards national reconciliation, in order to enhance better governance, achieve inclusiveness and preserve the pluralistic character of the Iraqi society. We also stress the importance of forthcoming provincial and national elections being fair and transparent, providing a positive contribution to the overall political process and reconciliation efforts. We reaffirm the importance of our commitment to provide and expedite, as appropriate, support for Iraq's efforts to address its fiscal and economic vulnerabilities. We reiterate our grave concern about allegations of manufacture and use of chemical weapons by ISIL/Da'esh in Iraq. We welcome the continued efforts of the Government of Iraq in this regard and reaffirm our commitment to working with and through the OPCW and other relevant organizations to mitigate the serious threat to international security posed by the use of chemical weapons by terrorist organizations.

We are aware of the damage caused by ISIL/Da'esh to cultural heritage in Iraq and warmly welcome the outcomes of the UNESCO International Coordination Conference on the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in Liberated Areas of Iraq (Paris, 23-24 February 2017). We support the development of a Plan of Action for Iraq to be drafted by UNESCO as agreed at the Paris Conference.

LIBYA

In Libya, cohesive support from the international community is key to consolidate the results attained so far, fight terrorism and achieve stability. We reaffirm our commitment to preserving the sovereignty, integrity and unity of Libya and to support the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) as the sole

framework within which political solutions can be found. We recall the principles decided at the Rome, Vienna and New York Ministerial meetings.

We reiterate our strong support to the Presidency Council (PC) and the Government of National Accord (GNA), headed by Prime Minister Fayez Al Sarraj, as the legitimate executive authorities under the LPA, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2259, and we underline our firm opposition to any attempt to disrupt the stabilization process. We urge all actors who have a role to play, including those who are still outside the LPA, to engage with a spirit of compromise towards the goal of achieving full political reconciliation, while desisting from actions that would exacerbate internal division and fuel further conflict. We reaffirm our full support to the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and its mediation effort.

We commend ongoing efforts to bridge political differences and make Libyan institutions more accountable, inclusive and efficient. We commend the continuous efforts of neighbouring countries in support of the LPA within the framework of the UN-led political process. We stress the importance of regional support for Libya and its democratic transition.

There is no military solution to Libya's problems. A solution can only be achieved through inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation. We share the Libyan people's desire to transform Libya to become a secure, democratic, prosperous, and unified state, where state authority and the rule of law prevail.

We welcome progress made in the Libyan economic dialogue and recall the necessity of an exclusive control of the PC over Libyan economic institutions and resources. We continue to encourage effective cooperation between the PC, the GNA, and the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) to ensure the GNA has the necessary tools to implement its fiscal and monetary policies for the wellbeing of all Libyans. We call on the GNA and CBL to fully implement their agreement to keep the legitimate economy functioning, ensure the necessary funds for government activities, bring the budget under control and end the liquidity crisis.

We particularly urge all parties to refrain from escalating tension in the Oil Crescent, as well as to work towards a durable solution that safeguards all petroleum infrastructure, resources and revenues for the benefit of all Libyans. We support the fulfilment of the LPA's mandate to keep oil infrastructure, production, and export under the exclusive control of the National Oil Corporation (NOC) acting under the authority of the PC. All oil revenues generated by the NOC must be transferred to the CBL, which must put the

funds at the disposal of the PC. We also urge restraint among armed groups in Libya's capital.

We commend the achievements made by the Libyan forces in the fight against ISIL/Da'esh. We welcome the defeat of ISIL/Da'esh in Sirte, and commend Libyan efforts fighting ISIL/Da'esh in Benghazi and in other parts of the country, and emphasize the crucial importance, for durable success, of unified armed forces under civilian oversight, joining efforts in the fight against terrorism. We also highlight the need for governance to restore public services and democratic rule in the liberated areas. We also commend the multi-national effort that resulted in the removal of the last chemical weapons precursors from Libya.

At the same time, we remain deeply concerned about human trafficking and migrant smuggling. We call on all Libyan parties to ensure secure access for humanitarian organizations to improve their response to the needs on the ground to ensure the respect of the fundamental rights of refugees and migrants and to protect them from abuses.

We reaffirm our commitment to supporting the PC/GNA and the people of Libya in order to broaden support for the LPA and reconciliation, consolidate effective state institutions, including security forces, restore public services, alleviate human suffering, protect and expand infrastructure, diversify the economy, manage migration flows, and eradicate the terrorist threat, while continuing to fight all forms of criminal activity.

THE SAHEL AND LAKE CHAD REGION

We remain concerned about the situation in the Sahel Region. The peace process in Mali remains of particular importance not only in establishing peace in that country but also in addressing the important terrorist threats, the surge of organized crime and migratory flows in the entire Sahel region. We call on all parties of the Malian Peace process to work constructively towards full implementation of the Algiers Peace Agreement. We applaud and will continue to support the efforts of the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin countries to fight terrorism and organized crime via more regional cooperation, such as the Sahel G 5 process and the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram. MINUSMA and the European Missions in the framework of the Common European Security and Defence Policy remain equally key actors for more stability in the region. We welcome the G7-AU initiative on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) control in the extended Sahel, which aims to promote synchronized efforts between donors, regional organizations and recipient countries.

We applaud the outcome of the Oslo Conference on the Lake Chad region on February 23rd/24th, encourage further contributions to relieve the dire humanitarian situation and the establishment of a consultative group on preventive actions and stabilization measures for the region.

AFRICA

We support joint efforts and partnership with African nations to advance democratic governance, security, stability, trade, and development on the continent.

The African Union and regional organizations on the continent are our equal partners, and together we will seek inclusive coordination through mutual dialogue and harmonization of policies. We welcome African Union-led initiatives to strengthen African voices in international affairs and to promote the long-term fiscal health and partnerships of the organization, including with respect to peace operations.

We support Africa's stability and development, we recognize its ownership and, consequently, we support its empowerment based on equal partnership. Our cooperation with Africa will be consistent with the universal framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and with the values of the African Union's 2063 Agenda ("The Africa We Want"). In this regard, we welcome the recent efforts by UN Secretary General Guterres to further cooperation with the African Union.

We acknowledge that peace and security are fundamental preconditions for successful and sustainable development outcomes and that they still represent primary concerns in some African countries. A holistic and integrated approach is required to address complex threats while ensuring peace support operations are financially and otherwise sustainable. This also means encouraging political dialogue and enhancing preventive diplomacy as important tools for reliable and peaceful political transitions. In this light, UN and African Union's mediation efforts are critical to improve peace and stability.

Terrorism - namely the threats posed by groups such as Al Shabaab, Boko Haram, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and ISIL/Da'esh - , and violent extremism remain a cause for concern in parts of Africa. Delivering good governance and protecting the rule of law are fundamental to address the drivers of conflicts. Elections represent a significant aspect of democracy and it is important that they are held in regular, free, fair, and transparent conditions, and in line with respective countries' constitutions. We encourage African partners to continue efforts for political inclusivity and stability by mitigating

social tensions, maintaining peace, encouraging interethnic and interreligious dialogue and dealing Africa's demographic shift towards a more youthful population.

Security and development are connected to each other. Focusing on economic growth, trade and sustainable development is crucial. We encourage the creation of national and regional regulatory frameworks, with associated anticorruption efforts, conducive to a strong business climates to incentivize just and sustainable private investments that boost development and deliver benefits throughout societies. Quality education, capacity building and Health access for all, access to electricity, water and sanitation, food security and women and youth empowerment are vital components of lasting sustainable and inclusive development, decent job creation and stability.

Recognizing that outbreaks, such as the 2014-2016 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, ongoing diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV, and the emergence and spread of drug resistant diseases, cost millions in lives and billions in economic loss, we welcome initial reforms undertaken by the World Health Organization (WHO) and others in order to better coordinate health crisis management and call for a continuous engagement in this respect. We also commend the work of the African Centre for Disease Control and reaffirm our Ise-Shima commitment to assist 76 countries and regions to build International Health Regulations (IHR) core capacities in close coordination with the WHO and other relevant organizations. In this regard, we welcome and support the WHO new Health Emergencies Programme and the implementation of the new WHO IHR Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, and remain committed to supporting global efforts to prepare for prevent, detect, notify, and respond to health emergencies and biological threats, whether naturally occurring, deliberate or accidental.

We recognize the global challenges related to irregular migration, trafficking of human beings and illicit goods, international terrorism and the visible consequences of climate changes affecting the Sub Saharan belt. We recognize the need to design and implement shared solutions aimed at alleviating human suffering and underline our support for the UN Secretary General's call on the international community to step up to address current crises in Africa.

We recognize that human mobility is important for African economies and represents a crosscutting issue that has to be addressed with a multi-dimensional approach. If it occurs in accordance with international law, it can foster mutual socio-economic progress. Effective border management, paired with investments in governance and development, reinforces the protection of the most vulnerable refugees and migrants, and victims of human trafficking,

while combating trafficking in human beings, drugs, arms, migrant smuggling, endangered wildlife species illegal trade and other criminal activity.

HORN OF AFRICA

We remain concerned by the severe drought crisis that affects countries in the Horn of Africa and wider region. It has a devastating humanitarian cost as well as political, economic stability and migration consequences. We call on the international community to respond effectively to this challenge and make a strong effort to minimise its impact and help to build longer term resilience in the countries. We welcome the positive step marked by the recent elections and the ongoing institution-building process in Somalia. We note that the London Somalia Conference in May provides an important opportunity to accelerate the delivery of critical political, security, economic and development commitments necessary for Somalia to become a more stable, secure and prosperous state.

YEMEN

The severe deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yemen, due to the ongoing conflict, has significant repercussions on the future prospects for all Yemenis and the region's peace and stability and continues to be cause for serious concern, especially given the potential for famine in parts of the country. We renew our urgent and pressing call for all parties to the conflict to avoid harming civilians, immediately agree to establish a durable cessation of hostilities, return to the political dialogue under the UN leadership and ensure full and safe humanitarian access to all ports of entry and to all regions of the country, for the benefit of all groups of society who are facing further severe levels of food insecurity and malnutrition, with risk of imminent famine.

It is vital that Yemen returns to a path of development; this is the only way to ensure both a sustainable and prosperous future for Yemen and the security of the country and the region. An inclusive, peaceful political solution to the crisis is the only viable option. We call for all sides to engage constructively with the UN Special Envoy in order to re-establish a cessation of hostilities and to restart talks aimed at reaching a comprehensive settlement agreement, we fully support the mediation efforts of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen and we encourage the UN to step up its efforts.

Achieving durable peace in Yemen is vital to realize the stability in the region as a whole and remove the space for terrorist organizations to thrive. We reiterate our commitment to counter all forms of terrorism in Yemen.

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Achieving Middle East peace remains a key priority and is instrumental to regional stability and security. We support the resumption without delay of substantive peace talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians aimed at achieving a negotiated solution that ensures the peace and security of both and takes into account UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338 and 1515. In this framework, regional stakeholders can play a pivotal role in the pursuit of peace. We call on both sides to avoid unilateral steps which may lead to escalation, prejudge the outcome of negotiations on the final status issues and generate further mistrust.

In the meantime, we strongly support dialogue and practical collaboration particularly in the field of security, access to water, sanitation, energy resources and in growing the Palestinian economy. In this context, we commend initiatives beneficial to all parties involved, such as the Red Sea-Dead Sea Project.

We recall the importance of addressing the dire humanitarian and security situation in the Gaza Strip, call for swift steps to improve the situation and emphasise the need for all sides to comply with international law.

UKRAINE

We stand united in our conviction that the crisis in Ukraine can only be solved by diplomatic means, in full respect for international law and principles and in full support of Ukraine's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty. We reiterate our condemnation of the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation and reaffirm our policy of non-recognition and sanctions against those involved. We are concerned at credible reports of a deteriorating human rights situation in Crimea and call on the Russian Federation to ensure the proper and unimpeded access of international human rights monitoring missions and human rights non-governmental organizations to Crimea.

We underline our commitment to the implementation of the Minsk Agreements to achieve a peaceful, sustainable and lasting solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. We urge all parties to fully implement them without delay. The security situation in the conflict area needs to be stabilized immediately. We urge all sides to take concrete steps that will lead to the complete ceasefire required under the Minsk Agreements. In particular, we expect Russia to live up to its commitments and to use its influence over the separatists to ensure they meet their obligations.

We reaffirm our strongest support to the negotiating efforts of the Normandy Group and to the multifaceted commitment of the OSCE for a solution to the crisis in Ukraine. We commend the activity of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission and call on the parties to guarantee the safety and security of observers as well as to grant them unfettered access to all conflict areas. We are concerned by the systematic pattern of obstruction and even intimidation of the OSCE SMM.

The humanitarian situation and access in eastern Ukraine close to the contact line remain a matter of concern.

We recognize the responsibility of the Russian Federation in the conflict in Ukraine and underline its subsequent pivotal role in restoring peace and stability in the country, by taking all necessary steps to improve the situation. Russia's behaviour is not consistent with the rules-based international order, whose principles we are committed to protecting and upholding. We remain united in using a wide array of foreign policy tools, including restrictive measures and sanctions, with the goal of persuading Russia to return to a path of shared respect of those principles. We reiterate our call on all sides to assume their responsibilities and fulfil their commitments under the Minsk Agreements, including the withdrawal of foreign armed formations and equipment from the territory of Ukraine, the return of Ukrainian control over its side of the international border and safe access and provision of humanitarian assistance to people in need. We recall that the duration of sanctions is clearly linked to Russia's complete implementation of its commitments in the Minsk Agreements and respect for Ukraine's sovereignty.

We maintain our commitment to assisting Ukraine in implementing its ambitious and yet necessary reform agenda. We commend Kyiv for the results so far attained in implementing institutional and administrative reforms but much remains to be done. We encourage the Ukrainian Government to target the most critical areas, in particular public administration and political reform, justice reform, decentralization, the fight against corruption and the promotion of civil freedom, particularly the freedom of expression. Efforts to tackle corruption should not be used against civil society, which is vital to Ukraine's reform path. It is key that social and economic reforms benefits are visible to all citizens of Ukraine.

We remain committed to providing support and assistance to accomplish the required reforms in the fiscal, judicial financial, energy, health, welfare and custom sectors as well as in corporate governance of State-owned enterprises. We welcome the ongoing efforts of the G7 Ukraine Support group and its further engagement in a constructive and productive dialogue with the Ukrainian authorities.

Energy security remains an important issue for Ukraine and the world. We remain committed to the Rome G7 Initiative for Energy Security to build a more diversified and resilient international energy system.

RUSSIA

We acknowledge that Russia is an important international player and that there are regional crises and global challenges that cannot be solved without cooperation with Russia. It is our mutual interest that Russia returns to the rules-based international security order and again becomes a cooperative partner. Upholding the principles of this order, we continue to use a wide array of foreign policy instruments, including restrictive measures. At the same time, we recognize that we have common interests with Russia in several areas, including countering terrorism and violent extremism in full respect of international law, confronting migration problems, fighting proliferation and finding answers to urgent environmental questions. We would welcome a constructive role by Russia in solving regional crises and unresolved regional questions. We underline our interest to engage individually and collectively with Russia in these areas and to actively look for ways to jointly address common challenges for the sake of more effective solutions. In addition, enhanced people-to-people contacts can form the basis for growing confidence in our bilateral and multilateral relations. We stand ready to intensify these contacts and call on Russia to allow for the necessary space by reversing its restrictive measures that limit the work of independent civil society and media.

Simultaneously, we also call on Russia to refrain from undermining or interfering in sovereign matters of other countries and consider such actions as highly detrimental to any future cooperation.

IRAN

We support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as an important contribution to the non-proliferation regime. Continued and full implementation of the JCPOA is essential to build confidence that Iran's nuclear program is exclusively peaceful in nature. We value the JCPOA's comprehensive structure and the commitment by all parties to its solid verification mechanism. We commend and continue supporting the IAEA in its crucial work in Iran, including monitoring and verification to help ensure compliance with Iran's JCPOA commitments and safeguard obligations, thus playing a key role in fostering mutual trust.

We stress the need for all parties to entirely and consistently fulfil all their commitments under the JCPoA in good faith. We reaffirm the need for Iran to strictly abide by all its nuclear related commitments.

UN Security Council Resolution 2231 needs to be fully implemented, including its provisions prohibiting the transfer of arms. We deeply regret Iran's testing of ballistic missiles; as such tests are inconsistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2231. We call upon Iran to play a constructive regional role by contributing to efforts to achieve political solutions, reconciliation and peace in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen and other parts of the region and to cooperate in countering the spread of terrorism and violent extremism.

We also call on Iran to comply with its international human rights obligations and in particular to ensure freedom of expression and to end arbitrary detentions and executions.

AFGHANISTAN

We reaffirm our long term commitment to a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan. We remain concerned about the level of violence in the country with terrorism and violent extremism threatening its security and stability. We commend the progress made in this challenging environment by the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces and the contribution provided by the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission.

We strongly support the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to facilitate an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. To this end we underscore the importance of good neighbourly relations and constructive dialogue and cooperation among all countries of the region to strengthen stability and combat all forms of terrorism.

We underline the necessity to accelerate the implementation of the urgent reforms by the Afghan Government, delivering in key sectors such as rule of law, the fight against corruption in all fields, promotion of human rights, in particular the rights of women and girls, electoral reform, combating narcotics, and economic governance. We also highlight the importance of good cooperation with the Afghan Government in the field of migration.

We stress that continuous and tangible progress by the Government of Afghanistan on its reform commitments needs to match the sustained international assistance in security and development fields decided last year, at the NATO Warsaw Summit and at the Brussels Conference.

NORTH KOREA

We reiterate that North Korea should remain a top priority on the international agenda. We condemn in the strongest terms North Korea's nuclear tests and the ballistic missile launches, which have seen a dramatic rise since the beginning of 2016, that clearly violate its international obligations and pose an increasing threat to regional and international security, peace and the global non-proliferation regime.

North Korea's repeated breaches of international law pose new levels of challenges and call for a determined and effective reaction by the international community. We demand that North Korea's leadership: refrain from any further nuclear tests or launches involving ballistic missile technology including intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs); not engage in any other destabilizing or provocative actions; comply with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and its commitments under the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks of 19 September 2005; and return - at an early date - to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and IAEA Safeguards.

Reiterating the international community's firm opposition to North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons, we reaffirm that North Korea must abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear and ballistic missile programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We are determined to strengthen measures aimed at achieving these objectives.

We welcome the unanimous adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 2321 (2016) and we call on the international community to ensure the sustained, comprehensive and thorough implementation of this resolution and all other relevant UN Security Council resolutions. In this regard, we share the view that it is important to increase international capacity-building efforts to ensure that current UN sanctions regimes are effectively implemented.

We remain concerned about the ongoing systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations in North Korea, including possible crimes against humanity, as documented in the 2014 Report of the UN Commission of Inquiry. We deplore that in order to develop its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles programmes, in violation of UN Security Council resolutions, critical State resources are diverted from primary needs such as the welfare and the livelihood of the people in North Korea.

We urge North Korea to take steps towards restoring cooperation with the UN and to promptly address the international community's humanitarian and human rights concerns, including the immediate resolution of the abductions issue. We express concern regarding the exploitation of workers sent abroad

from North Korea to work under conditions that reportedly amount to forced labour.

NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems continues to be a major and pressing concern and a threat to international peace and security.

We remain committed to the universalization and implementation of the in force Treaties and Conventions relevant to preventing and combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, namely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). And to this end, we continue to lend our full support to the efforts of the G7-led Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction to reduce the threat of terrorist acquisition of such weapons and materials worldwide.

There is no alternative to an inclusive step-by-step, progressive approach to promote nuclear disarmament taking into account the need for international stability and security for all as the way to create conditions that could allow a world without nuclear weapons.

In this respect, we reiterate our support for a halt to the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, which is the objective of a fissile material cut-off treaty, and welcome the establishment of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group to address challenges in this area. While recalling the UN Security Council Resolution 2310(2016), we note the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty's potential contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We strongly encourage all interested States to complete as a matter of priority the International Monitoring System established by the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. We also stress our commitment to take advantage of the upcoming NPT review cycle and, by focusing on fundamental common interests, to achieve progress, in strengthening the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and a foundation for nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy in conformity with non-proliferation obligations.

We are deeply concerned about the illicit transfer, especially to terrorists, and destabilizing accumulation of conventional arms, in particular small arms and light weapons, and related ammunition, which continue to constitute a major

challenge to security and development in many parts of the world. In this regard, we fully support the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects and we endorse Target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals to significantly reduce illicit arms flows by 2030. We stand ready to keep supporting efforts deployed by affected states, in particular on the African continent, to this aim. We continue to promote effective systems of national controls for exports and imports of conventional arms, such as those called for in the Arms Trade Treaty, to contribute to international and regional peace, security, and stability.

We express serious concern that a chemical weapon was used in a fatal incident on 13 February at Kuala Lumpur Airport 2 and express full support for Malaysia's ongoing investigation. We encourage its continued cooperation with the OPCW for the organization to be in a position to address the case.

OUTER SPACE

Outer space activities have immense potential. We recognize the rapid development of the modern space environment and the importance of outer space activities both in the day to day lives of our citizens and for the social, economic, scientific and technological development of all states. We are committed to enhancing the long-term safety, security, sustainability, and stability of the space environment, to increasing transparency in space activities, and to strengthening norms of responsible behaviour for all outer space activities.

MARITIME SECURITY

We reaffirm our commitment to further international cooperation on maritime security and safety as well as the protection of the marine environment. We are convinced that only a combined effort will allow for a comprehensive response to threats to maritime security and ocean and seas conditions. We are committed to coordinating our actions internationally, regionally and nationally in order to achieve global benefits.

We reiterate our commitment to maintaining a rules-based maritime order based firmly on international law, including as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and to peaceful dispute settlement, including through legal means and supported by confidence building measures.

We reiterate our commitment to the freedoms of navigation and over-flight and other rights, freedoms, and internationally lawful uses of the seas.

We remain concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas. We emphasize the fundamental importance of building trust and security and of the peaceful management and settlement of maritime disputes in good faith and in accordance with international law, including through internationally recognized legal dispute settlement mechanisms, including arbitration. We reiterate our strong opposition to any unilateral actions which increase tensions, such as the threat or use of force, large scale land reclamation, building of outposts, as well as their use for military purposes and urge all parties to pursue demilitarization of disputed features and to comply with their obligations under international law. We consider the July 12, 2016 award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal under the UNCLOS as a useful basis for further efforts to peacefully resolve disputes in the South China Sea. We encourage dialogues based on international law towards early finalization of an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) and we welcome efforts to advance in this direction. We call for the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety.

We firmly reiterate our condemnation for acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea, transnational organized crime and terrorism in the maritime domain, trafficking of human beings, smuggling of migrants, trafficking of weapons and narcotics, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and other illegal maritime activities. We reaffirm the importance of national and regional ownership in pursuing the fight against illegal activities at sea. We commend the work done by the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), the G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea, the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) and the results achieved by EU, NATO and other multinational naval operations and independent deployers.

We commit to pursuing a more holistic approach to support national and regional efforts and their ownership, which remain key in improving maritime security in the existing critical areas. Regional cooperation mechanisms should continue their activities to enhance maritime security, fully exploiting the scope of their founding instrument.

We will continue our cooperation at national and international level ashore and at sea in order to fight human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants in the maritime domain – and in particular in those areas requiring the highest degree of attention – also safeguarding against any further loss of life at sea.

We are committed to supporting regional maritime security in regions affected by maritime crimes through comprehensive capacity building assistance under existing instruments in areas such as maritime governance, coast guard authorities and functions, disaster relief, maritime search and rescue, and maritime information sharing and integration including Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), as well as efforts to improve legislative, judicial, and prosecutorial capacities.

We welcome the African Union Summit on maritime security and safety and development in Africa, held in October 2016 in Togo, and the Lomé Charter signed on that same occasion. Its further development and implementation will increase the overall maritime ability of the African Union. We also recognize the importance of ensuring free and open seas, including the Mediterranean, the Gulf of Guinea and the Indo-Pacific and enhancing connectivity of the region.

We also welcome the entry into force of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement in June 2016 and we call upon all coastal states to accede to this significant international treaty specifically aimed at tackling IUU fishing.

We welcome and encourage research activities aimed at providing scientific and technological support to enhance maritime security. We support the work of the Preparatory Committee on the development of a future internationally legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

We are committed to supporting cooperation, capacity-building and appropriate access to financial and technical support to help countries realize their priorities while safeguarding the ocean's health and improving climate resilience in order to ensure conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources including marine biodiversity.

We welcome the Italian initiative to host a G7 High Level Meeting on Maritime Security and the EU initiative to host the "Our Ocean" Conference, later this year.

CYBER

We reaffirm our support for an accessible, open, interoperable, reliable and secure cyberspace. We recognize the enormous benefits for economic growth and prosperity that we and all others derive from it as an extraordinary tool for economic, social, and political development. While cyberspace offers a wide range of opportunities, we recognize the vulnerability of our digital world, as

well as the new and multifaceted dangers emanating from all possible directions and involving State and non-State actors.

Recognizing the threat of the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) against critical infrastructure, noting increased concern over cyber-enabled interference in democratic processes, and bearing in mind the risk of misperceptions and uncontrolled escalation, we reaffirm our commitment to work within the G7 and other relevant international and multi-stakeholder fora to promote strategic frameworks for conflict prevention, cooperation and stability in cyberspace. This will be based on the applicability of existing international law to State behaviour in cyberspace, respect for human rights obligations, the promotion of voluntary and non-binding norms of responsible state behaviour during peacetime, the development and the implementation of practical cyber confidence building measures between States as well as capacity building initiatives.

We reaffirm and note with approval the widespread affirmation by other States that international law and, in particular, the United Nations Charter is applicable to the use of ICTs by States, and essential to maintaining peace and stability and promoting an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment. To increase predictability and stability in cyberspace, we call on States to publicly explain their views on how existing international law applies to States' activities in cyberspace to the greatest extent possible.

We reiterate our support for the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (UN-GGE) process and look forward to a substantial outcome of the 2016-2017 UN-GGE, which should offer further clarity on the application of international law in cyber space, further elaborate on agreed norms of state behaviour during peacetime, advise on the development of confidence building measures and underline the crucial role of capacity building in assisting all states in implementing these undertakings. In this context, we call upon all States to be guided in their use of ICTs by the UN-GGE's cumulative reports and take measures to operationalize the recommendations contained therein.

Against this background, we have adopted the G7 Declaration on Responsible States Behaviour in Cyberspace and reinforce our commitment to its strategic framework for conflict prevention, cooperation and stability in cyberspace, as a concrete contribution to peace and security, and we encourage similar commitments from other States.

We also urge all countries to develop laws, policies and practices that effectively combat cybercrime, including, if possible, to become party to the 2001 Budapest Convention against Cybercrime.

We believe that, over time, international consensus on cooperative frameworks, at regional and international levels, can provide for a common vision and an appropriate platforms for responsible States to join together in a common endeavour aimed at preserving stability in cyberspace, facilitating the peaceful settlement of disputes, taking effective measures against wrongful acts in accordance with existing international law, and enhancing cyber capacity building activities.

DEAUVILLE PARTNERSHIP

We reaffirm our support to the efforts of the Middle East and North Africa countries (MENA) to cope with the severe challenges that the region has been facing, including the presence of open conflicts as well as the rise and spread of violent extremism, which are contributing to complex humanitarian crises and unprecedented displacement and cross-border movements of people.

Sound democratic institutions, inclusive economic growth, regional integration and active civil society participation are key to the stability and development of Arab Countries in Transition (ACTs). We remain committed to supporting these countries through the Deauville Partnership, an important platform for policy dialogue and cooperation between the G7, ACTs, regional partners and relevant international institutions.

The implementation of the Compact on Economic Governance is a core element of our dialogue with the ACTs, with a view to assisting the planning and implementation of structural reforms. We stress the importance of developing human capital as a driver of socio-economic progress, in line with the relevant Strategic Framework for the Development of Human Capital, focusing in particular on youth and women, as well as on the role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in tackling broad economic challenges and creating opportunities for sustainable and inclusive growth, with a strong attention to marginalized regions.

We welcome the achievement of the capitalization target of the MENA Transition Fund and recognize the important impact of the Fund's projects for key reform areas in the ACTs. We underline the importance of continued international support to the ACTs, both by enhancing coordination of the IFIs activities and promoting greater synergies among the bilateral actions of the G7.

We stand ready to consider a further evolution of the Partnership and the G7's relationship with the ACTs, in light of the developments in the MENA Region. We commit to exploring with the ACT countries the best means for supporting them and we remain open to possible cooperation with other initiatives focusing on the Mediterranean.

UN, PEACE AND SECURITY

We welcome the UN Secretary-General's calls for reform within the UN system, which will help the organization to become more efficient, transparent, accountable and coordinated across its pillars, in order to tackle effectively the complex challenges of today and tomorrow.

We also welcome the UN Secretary General's call to enhance the UN's role in sustaining peace through a holistic and comprehensive approach aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflicts. We recognize that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development builds on that understanding by taking an integrated approach, and by including Goal 16 on achieving peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice and building accountable institutions. Therefore, we welcome the commitment of the UN Secretary General to make the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals a priority.

We are committed to strengthening the impact and effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations and peace-building activities by improving leadership, increasing accountability, expanding the pool of capable forces through appropriate training of personnel, and enhancing integrated planning, with a focus on ensuring that UN peacekeeping missions are better able to provide the appropriate international response for the circumstances, and that they are properly designed for the tasks they are mandated to perform. We also reaffirm our commitment to address the gaps in peacekeepers' equipment. We reiterate the vital role that UN peacekeeping operations can play in protecting civilians.

We will also work to enhance and diversify the UN's conflict prevention and mediation capabilities. We therefore support the ongoing reforms of the UN's peace and security architecture. On peacekeeping, these include the drive for better planning of Peacekeeping operations, encouraging further pledges and achieving the highest standard of performance, while also taking into account the reviews of the peacebuilding architecture and the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Success in the prevention and management of conflicts depends also in part on human and financial resources availability and we

therefore encourage all UN Member States to provide the necessary support in these areas.

We welcome the joint initiative by Italy and the UK at the UN to increase the participation of women in global conflict prevention and mediation and commit to work with the UN and like-minded countries to advance this important agenda.

We reaffirm our commitment to achieving the highest standards of conduct and discipline of UN peacekeepers, including through training, and to this aim we emphasize the importance of promoting trilateral initiatives between countries providing training, troop- and police-contributing countries, and donors, including on efforts to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation.

We call on all states to support and comply fully with the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse, including by implementing the measures requested in UN Security Council Resolution 2272.

Within and beyond the UN system, we reiterate the importance of including women, youth and moderate religious leaders in peace processes. In particular, we renew our call to increase women's meaningful participation in all political, governance and security structures at all levels to achieve sustainable peace and security, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820 and related resolutions. As governments and donors, we will continue to promote the equal and full involvement of women as actors of peace, recognizing their key role in conflict prevention, mediation peacebuilding and stabilization. We will continue to promote a security response to prevent and protect women, children and youth from sexual and gender-based violence during armed conflict. We reaffirm our commitment to develop and to encourage the adoption of National Action Plans to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda. We acknowledge the fact that the effective implementation of the Women, peace and Security agenda require resources and predictable long-term funding.

Attacks against historical, cultural and religious patrimony impact very seriously on conflicts and post-conflict reconciliation. We therefore affirm the importance of protecting and preserving cultural diversity and the historical marks of identity, and support, where relevant and appropriate and on a case by case basis, as authorized by the UN Security Council, the inclusion of provisions concerning the protection of cultural heritage in UN peacekeeping operations' mandates. We encourage all States to support UNESCO's efforts to counter the destruction, looting and trafficking of antiquities.

We take note of the UNESCO Heritage emergency fund as well as of the international fund for the protection of endangered cultural heritage in armed

conflict, announced in Abu Dhabi on December, 3rd 2016, and encourage all States to contribute to support preventive and emergency operations and fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property.

We look forward to discussions during the 201st Session of the UNESCO Executive Board concerning the UNESCO Action Plan for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the event of armed conflict. Acknowledging that peacekeeping operations may negatively affect the host country's environment, local economy and community, we underline the need to uphold the environmental sustainability of peace operations and the UN's role in assessing and mitigating the footprint of peacekeeping across the whole mission cycle.

We commend the work of the G7 Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Experts Group in considering and advising on these important peace and security issues, including the role of women, in consultation with the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union.

We welcome the continuous efforts of the G7 Working Group on Climate Change and Fragility, the Group's Terms of Reference and we look forward to its progress report in 2018. We also encourage the Working Group to identify proposals for action to increase resilience in fragile states.

HUMAN RIGHTS

We reaffirm our commitment to the protection and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. We recall the universal and interdependent character of all human rights, including civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. We recall that compliance with obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law as well as accountability are fundamental for peace and security.

We will continue to oppose and work to eliminate all forms of discrimination across the world.

We reaffirm the importance of promoting pluralism, inclusion, respect for diversity, as well as cross-cultural, cross-religious, and interfaith dialogues, freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief. We express our deep concern for all cases of persecution against persons belonging to religious or ethnic minorities across the world.

We will continue to promote actively gender equality and women's rights. We are fully committed to an effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Cairo Program of Action, the outcomes of their review conferences, and the fulfilment of States' obligations under the Convention on Elimination of

All Forms of Discrimination against Women to empower women and girls and to advance their human rights as a matter of priority, also in line with the 2030 Agenda.

We remain committed to combat all forms of violence against women and girls, men and boys, including gender-based violence and sexual violence in conflict, as well as to end harmful practices such as child early and forced marriages and female genital mutilations. We are fully engaged in actively protecting and promoting the rights of children and commit to enhance efforts to reach those most vulnerable.

We commit to redoubling our efforts to achieving the eradication of forced and child labour, modern slavery and human trafficking.

We recognize the important role of civil society in protecting and promoting human rights, in the shared belief that a vibrant civil society contributes to democratic societies, stability and prosperity. We will continue working to shape conditions conducive for civil society activities and to safeguard the safety and rights of human rights defenders and journalists.

