



**ECOSOC**

United Nations Economic and Social Council

**TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES**

**Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the  
Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)  
on the Situation in Sahel**

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**Remarks at the Opening Segment  
H.E Ambassador Frederick Makamure Shava  
President of the Economic and Social Council**

**Wednesday, 28 June 2017, 10:00**

Conference Room 4

Your Excellency Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission

Your Excellency Deputy Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission on the Situation in Sahel.

This meeting builds on our joint meeting of last year that focused on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace. You would recall that, during that meeting, many of you strongly supported regular dialogues between ECOSOC and the PBC to promote coherence and complementarity between the UN's peace and security efforts and its development, human rights and humanitarian work.

One of the recommendations from that meeting included “forging closer collaboration between ECOSOC and the PBC to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to sustain peace, including through regular joint meetings”.

It is widely acknowledged that if we want to make the SDGs a reality for all, we need to make sustaining peace an integral part of a coordinated and coherent approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We cannot continue with business as usual. We need to address the drivers of conflict, such as economic and social inequalities, lack of economic opportunities, poor natural resource management and other deficits in governance. Strengthening institutions to become more transparent, accountable and effective must also be a priority.

Furthermore, infrastructure development and sustainable industrialization can help create the much needed jobs and contribute to building peaceful societies. We must also keep in mind that lack of opportunities can make young people vulnerable to socially disruptive activities that undermine social cohesion, peace and development. Therefore, we must focus on creating decent jobs for young people.

Given this backdrop, ECOSOC and the PBC have joined forces to focus on the situation in the Sahel region, which remains fragile, despite efforts at national, regional and

international levels. This is a region with complex and multidimensional challenges. These range from socio-economic inequalities to climate change to lack of economic opportunities and jobs. Today, we will take stock of existing strategies and plans for the region and explore opportunities for regional and cross-border cooperation for stability, resilience and long-term development.

The achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement for Climate Change and sustaining peace call for not only an integrated approach to policy making and implementation, but also a cross-border approach for building the resilience of communities in the Sahel region.

We will explore how we can better coordinate the existing strategies and plans to achieve results on the ground. We know commitments have been made to the Sahel region, but what we are interested today are results achieved and lessons learned. We also would like to hear the challenges in the implementation of existing commitments. We would like to hear your views on how to improve the nexus between peace and development to accelerate the implementation of our commitments to the region.

We are honoured to have with us the Deputy Secretary-General who will be delivering a keynote address to share with us the UN's vision and priorities for the Sahel region.

This is an opportunity to utilize the coordination and policy guidance mandate of ECOSOC in relation to the UN system to address the development dimensions of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS). We are pleased to have with us today, Mr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), who will provide us an overview of the implementation of this strategy and the remaining challenges. We are also pleased to have Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Africa of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

I now have the pleasure to give the floor to my co-chair, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Cho Tae-yul to deliver opening remarks.