



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

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Statement

by

H.E. Ms. Halimah DeShong

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UNOWAS Briefing

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Excellencies,

First allow me to extend warmest congratulations to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for assuming the presidency of the Council this month. Thanks also to SRSR Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, for his insightful briefing.

We express our support for the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel, which continues to make valuable contributions to conflict prevention, peacebuilding, sustainable development and cooperation in the subregion.

My country takes this opportunity to commend some of the positive advances in the subregion, particularly the commitment made by ECOWAS Member States, along with Chad and Mauritania, to enhance their engagement and cooperation to respond to terrorism. We also welcome the political dialogues in Liberia and Senegal, the progress made by Gambia on constitutional reform and transitional Justice and the successful electoral processes in Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau.

Notwithstanding this progress, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is troubled by the terrorist threat, insecurity, humanitarian and development concerns that persist in the subregion.

UNOWAS, in our opinion, is strategically placed to ensure synergy and complementarity among the various countries' security plans; hence, guaranteeing that a comprehensive vision exists to tackle the festering cells of violent extremism and organized criminal activities.

Additionally, we recognize the work of the Peacebuilding Commission as well as the Economic and Social Council, which last year adopted a resolution on the Sahel Strategy. We would like to encourage this coordination between UN organs.

Mr. President,

One of the main objectives of pursuing a lasting and sustaining peace in the subregion is to enhance the lives of people. Unfortunately, we have learned from the Secretary General's reports, and during SRSG Chambas' briefing, that millions of people continue to be negatively affected by instability in the subregion, through displacement, food insecurity, the risk of acute malnutrition or the lack of basic services. We commend the entities and people who continue to engage on the humanitarian front, despite the challenges and risks involved. We further encourage the support of the international community to take the necessary measures to sustain their noble work.

Mr. President,

Any solution to the instability that plagues various areas across West Africa and the Sahel region must meaningfully recognize and target the root causes of those conflicts. Strategies must therefore be comprehensive, incorporating elements of sustainable development, climate adaptation and resilience measures, along with human rights protection and promotion in line with national laws. We welcome the continued analysis of the link between climate and security made in the SG's report, as well as any future further collaboration similar to that being pursued between ECOWAS and various UN offices, on this issue of critical importance.

The Secretary General's report references the adverse consequences of climate change in the Lake Chad Basin and parts of the Sahel. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is gravely concerned about the impact of climate change in West Africa and the Sahel. In the immediate term, we need to mobilize to support climate adaptation in the region. Member States must do all we can to lessen this threat multiplier, through supporting adaptation measures as a matter of urgency, and by realizing our collective responsibility to reduce our carbon emissions for the sake of future generations and a lasting and sustaining peace. In this vein, it is important to note that young people comprise 65% of the population of West Africa and the Sahel. Words of the late Vincentian poet Daniel Williams are apt: "...only the future is ours

to desecrate. The present is the past, and the past our fathers' mischief." These words remind us of the weight we collectively bear in our quest to secure a bright and prosperous future for succeeding generations. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is committed to this goal and looks forward to engaging constructively to this end.

Thank you.