



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

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Statement

by

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VTC Meeting on the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

Security Council

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Thank you, Mr. President, [and I especially thank you for convening this very important meeting].

Mr President,

As we convene today under extremely dire circumstances, we thank the Secretary-General for his sobering remarks, his leadership and his constructive approach to this pandemic. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines echoes the SG's repeated calls for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world. Now, more than ever, we should focus on leveraging our individual skill-sets, our national technical and economic comparative advantages, and our varying degrees of medical, technological, and even naturopathic expertise in order to overcome the immense struggles of the COVID-19 pandemic. We must place our narrow economic self-interests and political agendas aside in order to ensure that our international community is bolstered by a shared vision and a common purpose of defeating COVID-19, for *all* of humanity. Accordingly, we call for an immediate end to all unilateral coercive economic measures that serve to undermine, rather than facilitate, global cooperation, including but not limited to, those imposed on affected African Union Member States.

The Security Council remains the principal body with the responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Under turbulent circumstances such as these, our Council must continue to discharge of its responsibilities proactively and resolutely. While we accept that the Council can only act within its mandate in accordance with the UN Charter, we must not allow inertia to prevent this Council from making its voice heard at a time when the world needs us the most. The message we must deliver today is one of hope, unity and solidarity. The

unprecedented challenges of COVID-19 necessitate a comprehensive and coordinated strategy that brings together the entire UN system and the wider international community to systematically address the overlapping socioeconomic, political, security, and health dimensions of today's crisis. Indeed, these interrelated and interconnecting challenges converge to threaten international peace and security in ways that our forebears did not envisage when they conceived our multilateral system. The onus is now on each and every one of us to engage constructively *and* creatively in order to ensure that a peaceful and prosperous future remains within reach for all of our nations and peoples.

Mr President, We join the call for the PBC to act as a bridge between the various UN bodies and agencies working on this pandemic.

Fighting the simultaneous challenges of today's pandemic is a responsibility shared by our entire global family. In this moment, it is emblematic that the WHO designated 2020 to be "The Year of the Nurse and the Midwife." We must honour the selfless contributions and sacrifices of all frontline workers and first-responders, including our peacekeepers. They are all equal participants in our efforts to maintain international peace and security. We must stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters throughout the world as we lift each other up in this struggle against COVID-19.

While we convene today amidst a torrent of closed borders and physical distancing policies required to stem the COVID-19 pandemic, the urgent challenges facing our world *cannot* be addressed by retreating to a corner of

isolationism. Persons living in IDP camps, or those under the threat of terrorism and armed group activity in many parts of the world do not have the privileges of physical distancing and often have few walls and barriers to hide behind. Live and living must continue amidst the monumental challenges of COVID-19. And so must the work of the Council that facilitates the safety and security of so many.

Indeed, Mr President, the largest footprint of peacekeeping missions is on the African continent and matters of international peace and security in various parts of the Continent occupy more than half this Council's agenda. We want to end by calling, in particular, for international support for Africa to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic, including through concessionary loans and quick impact projects; for adaptation of peacekeeping missions to respond to COVID-19; for the Peacebuilding Architecture to properly take account of the impact of this Pandemic; and, of course, for enforcement of ceasefires and effective monitoring of Arms Embargoes.

I thank you.