



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

685 3rd Ave., Suite 1108, New York, NY 10017 • Tel: (212) 599-0950 • Fax: (212) 599-1020 •

svgmission@gmail.com | <http://svg-un.org>

Statement

by

H.E. Hon. Dr. Ralph E. Gonsalves

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Challenges of Maintaining Peace and Security in Fragile Contexts

Security Council

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Thank you, Mr. President, Your Excellencies,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commends the Republic of Tunisia for convening today's open debate. Addressing the root causes of fragility is fundamental to maintaining peace and security, and to this end, we thank the Secretary General and other esteemed briefers for sharing important insights on this salient topic. I am particularly grateful for the profound reflections on this subject by the distinguished Presidents of Tunisia, Niger, and Kenya — the A3 on the Security Council with which countries St. Vincent and the Grenadines has been working closely as the A3 plus One. I thank, too, my brother Uhuru, the distinguished President of Kenya, for his kind words about Ralph and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Excellencies,

The year 2020 has been an immensely challenging one, which offered many important lessons - not the least of which is the importance of multilateralism. Amidst the continuously expanding public health, socioeconomic, humanitarian, and security challenges experienced the world over, there is a clear and present need for practical and people-centered solutions that bolster national ownership in countries that require assistance. To be sure, there is no magic panacea for the root causes of fragility which include, amongst other factors, the debilitating effects of climate change and environmental degradation, food and health insecurity, poverty and underdevelopment. But through solidarity and collective action, a better future remains within the grasp of those who yearn for it - from Haiti to the Horn of Africa, and from the Sahel to Yemen.

During our presidency in November, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines hosted a high-level event on the "Contemporary Drivers of Conflict and Insecurity." We use the opportunity of today's meeting to recall that, in their collective wisdom, our briefers, Council Members and the wider UN Membership called for a comprehensive and coordinated "whole-of-system" approach to addressing the root, and proximate, causes of fragility and insecurity, including those that have been left largely unsettled by the rapid process of decolonisation. The Security Council must continue to play a leading role as it works more closely with the other main organs of the UN System, namely, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to foster

developmental solutions to the challenges of peace and security. We must also leverage more often the strategic advisory capacity and convening platform of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to mobilise multilateral partners, including regional and sub-regional organisations and International Financial Institutions (IFIs), to assist Member States in building institutions, strengthening capacities and addressing the challenges of fragility.

As we advance together in this important decade of action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, greater political will is needed, *by all Member States*, if we are to make good on the promise of leaving no one behind. We reiterate our appeal to developed countries to honour their overseas development assistance (ODA) commitments; to provide scaled up support to conflict-affected countries through concessionary loans, debt relief, and quick impact projects; and to provide greater support for climate adaptation and mitigation to alleviate climate-driven security risks in fragile contexts. We also echo the calls of Sir Hilary Beckles, our keynote speaker in November, for the Special Committee on Decolonisation (C-24) to finalise its important work; and for reparations to be provided for the historical crimes of native genocide, African slavery, and violent colonisation which left severe legacies of underdevelopment in their wake. Reparatory justice must form part of any serious international development agenda. Finally, we encourage all countries to adhere fully with the principles of international law, and in so doing, to refrain from all forms of unilateral coercion imposed on weaker nations. Even in the most difficult of circumstances, a firm commitment to the timeless principles of sovereignty and political independence, within the frame of a mature multi-lateralism, provides the greatest assurances against chaos and disorder.

Excellencies,

The history of human civilisation is punctuated by awesome challenges that brought people together and created much-needed catalysts for positive change. Just as the Second World War provided the impetus for this United Nations to emerge from the ashes of conflict, so too can the COVID-19 pandemic be used as a critical turning point where we pursue, collectively and earnestly, a renewed and effective multilateralism that works in the interest of all nations and peoples. Let us seize this moment and fashion a better future for all of humanity. It is time for appropriate action!

Thank You.