

Delegation from Côte d'Ivoire
Position Paper for the UN Security Council

The following topics will be discussed by the UN Security Council (UNSC): Environmental Migration as a Concern for Peace and Security, Preventing Violence Towards Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and Partnerships Between the United Nations and Relevant Regional Organizations in Peacekeeping Operations. Côte d'Ivoire is eager to participate in the debate and share its valuable experiences in that regard.

I. Environmental Migration as a Concern for Peace and Security

Despite a lack of concrete numbers, it is clear to those affected that environmental migration accounts for an increasingly large part of migration flows, which can lead to conflict by worsening the competition over increasingly scarce resources, shifting inter-group balances, or straining governmental capacities. These potential impacts are unequally distributed: While their contributions to climate change were insignificant, developing nations, such as Côte d'Ivoire, suffer most from climate change with the Food and Agriculture Organization predicting a 50% decline in African crop yield. As a top-destination country for African migration, a state bordering the severely-affected Sahel region, and a country with millions living in flood-prone coastal regions, we will be strongly impacted by climate change directly or indirectly via environmental migration.

While there have been some international acknowledgements of the links between migration and environmental factors, such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018), none have specifically addressed environmental migration. Thus, Côte d'Ivoire was eager to participate in the Council's 8451st meeting on "addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security" in January. Our Permanent Representative, Mr. Ipo, demonstrated our country's commitment to a multilateral approach by endorsing the results of the 774th meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC), which called for enhanced cooperation among all stakeholders on, and continental frameworks for prevention, mitigation, resilience, and communication. This commitment to international solutions follows from the mission of our Council mandate, sharing a culture of peace through dialogue, and is reflected in our country's regional leadership. On the issue of migration, Côte d'Ivoire has been commended by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for its welcoming stance towards victims of forced migration and is proud to remain one of the top destinations for immigrants in Africa.

In light of these aspects, Côte d'Ivoire calls upon states to adapt their perspective on environmental migration: It entails those directly and indirectly affected by environmental changes, latter due to its consequences for their economic, social or political circumstances. As all these conditions are intertwined, the delegation calls upon states to view migration on a scale from voluntary (instead of a binary) to forced whereby voluntariness depends on free choice and the existence of acceptable alternatives to migration, counting as unacceptable violations of the rights set out in both International Covenants. With many immigrating into our country because they can improve their, due to deteriorating environmental circumstances, now unbearable situation, we are aware of the complex interaction of contextual factors that may led to neither clearly forced nor voluntary migration. To ensure this complex reality is respected and all forced migrants are protected, we recommend the UNSC to call for the IOM and the UNHCR to be subsumed under a new rights-based organization that pushes for expanding protections based on the degree of voluntariness.

To take a first step, the Council should expand the new inter-agency "climate security mechanism", supported by UN Development, UN Environment, and the UN Department for Peacebuilding and Political Affairs (DPPA), by adding IOM and the UNHCR to it and institutionalizing it as a UNSC subsidiary body that gains certain enforcement powers. First, it should of course develop a definition of environmental migration, create a framework for evaluating voluntariness and conflict impacts, and develop data collection capacities. Secondly, it should coordinate multilateral responses to adverse impacts of climate change, especially environmental migration and displacement. Third, to counteract the imbalance between those affected (primarily developing countries) and those responsible (primarily developed countries), this agency should be able to compel Member States that do not achieve their international commitments to provide compensation to the affected countries and aid to those countries that receive environmental migrants. This organization should also cooperate with other organizations (e.g. AU, ECOWAS) to provide these services, including the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage to develop the compensation plan.

II. Preventing Violence Towards Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

With 68.5 million forcibly displaced persons, most of which are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), the international community needs to urgently ensure their protection. Many of them are subject to severe forms of violence, especially sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Clearly, the current international regime on the protection of refugees and IDPs is lacking as the UNHCR only has the exclusive mandate and legal

responsibility for the protection of refugees but not for IDPs. The protection of civilians (POC) in conflict, specifically refugees and forcibly displaced people, is primarily taken up by this Council via its peacekeeping missions that enable it to actively reduce the violence debated here. Our own country, Côte d'Ivoire, has benefitted from peacekeeping operations (PKO) and other measures by the international community during and after its civil war and its 2011 post-election crisis, and the UN PKO UNOCI has been heralded as a success in restoring peace and security with Ivorian authorities achieving one of the most successful post-crisis reconstructions in collaboration with the UNOCI and other organizations. During that time, hundreds of thousands of Ivorians were forcibly displaced under, sometimes, deplorable conditions. These past experiences commit us to, as stated in our memo for our Council membership, "peace through dialogue", peacekeeping missions, and the protection of human rights, including those of refugees and IDPs.

Several international conventions and resolutions addressed the need to prevent this violence, including the 1951 Convention or the UNSC resolution 1296 (2000). The importance of this topic for Côte d'Ivoire, especially as it relates to PKO, is also reflected in the actions during our Council Presidency: Our president, Mr. Ouattara, began it with a session on building and sustaining peace in the context of post-conflict reconstruction, security and stability with a speech sharing lessons from our experiences and the need to take into account refugees, IDPs (including stateless persons), and the protection of civilians. A few days later, the Council adopted resolution 2447, co-drafted by the Netherlands and Côte d'Ivoire, which put a focus on the protection of civilians, including refugees and IDPs. On the national level, our country was able to return almost all IDPs and refugees to their habitual home and implemented many measures to address statelessness within our country, which is a huge contributor to violence against IDPs and refugees.

Besides the aforementioned merger of UNHCR and IOM that can expand the existing protections and, thus, enable the reduction of violence, the Council should call for the UNHCR to gain comprehensive responsibility for the protection of IDPs. Within the Council's framework, we see the issue of violence against refugees and IDPs as something to be directly addressed within the POC mandate of peacekeeping missions. Hence, POC should become the top priority of all POK, both in planning and execution. For that, other agencies should be integrated more into the planning process with the Department of Peace Operations, especially the UNHCR to assess the potential impact on refugees and IDPs and develop protection strategies for them. Finally, we recommend the Council to adapt the recommendations by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), which include enhancing the operational control of the UN over its military contingents as the POC mandate often fails due to different views on the POC mandate and the use of force by the troop-contributing country and the Council, the clarification of peacekeeping tasks at the tactical level to facilitate speedy decision-making, and the improvement of coordination with humanitarian entities.

III. Partnerships Between the United Nations and Relevant Regional Organizations in Peacekeeping Operations

It is widely acknowledged that cooperation and collaboration between the UN and regional organizations on peacekeeping operations (PKO) has mutual benefits as the UN gains regional expertise while the limited capacities of regional organizations are extended. There have been many efforts strengthening these partnerships, such as UNSC resolution 1809 (2008), and the African Union-UN cooperation has been especially close: In 2010, the UN Office to the African Union (UNOAU) and the UN-AU Joint Task Force on Peace and Security were established while the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (since 2007) demonstrated the benefits of hybrid missions. As regional leader, Côte d'Ivoire has always supported efforts to strengthen the AU's cooperation and collaboration with the UN, especially with regard to PKO. That is why the President of Côte d'Ivoire chaired the AUPSC Summit that was dedicated to the AU-UN partnership in matters of peace and security in 2013 and that is why during our time as AUPSC Chair the strategic framework for cooperation in peace and security was adopted by the AU and UN (2012).

However, despite its success, UNAMID still has some issues regarding the UN-AU cooperation mostly based on the lack of mutual understanding on peacekeeping. More generally, the cooperation has been somewhat lopsided and the partnerships with other regional organizations lack behind. Therefore, we call for better cooperation with other regional organizations by establishing, for instance, offices resembling UNOAU with a focus on the area of peace and security. To counterbalance, similar offices should be established by the these organizations at the UN with divisions on peace and security. To increase PKO cooperation, the UNSC should create a subsidiary Regional Advisory Council that assists in cooperation on peace and security with secondary advisory councils to the DPO and DPPA to improve the cooperation in the planning phase. Such cooperation will not succeed unless both organizations share a common set of beliefs: Hence, the Secretary General should increase the participation of regional organization in his Action for Peacekeeping initiative to foster a common understanding of peacekeeping shared by regional organizations.