



# AUSTRALIA



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## UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

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## Conflict Prevention and Sustaining Peace

**Statement by H.E. Ms Gillian Bird  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
of Australia to the United Nations**

**Check against delivery**

Conflict prevention and sustaining peace go to the heart of the UN Charter. They are core principles bringing together all three pillars of the UN's work. We therefore welcome Sweden's choice of this topic for the first open debate of Secretary-General Guterres' tenure.

Australia is deeply committed to this agenda. We were pleased to co-facilitate the Sustaining Peace resolutions, and strongly support the key messages from recent major reviews. We commend the Secretariat on progress, and look forward to breaking new ground this year in advancing the use of conflict prevention tools and policies.

We particularly welcome the Secretary-General's comments that, inspired by the Sustaining Peace resolutions, he will take forward comprehensive reform. Cultural, process and structural reforms based on the Sustaining Peace resolutions are all crucial. He has the prerogative to make such necessary reforms to the organisation as they fall within his authority, and we encourage him to continue to do so. We are greatly encouraged by the Secretary-General's early decisions to strengthen the Secretariat's performance.

More must be done to improve coherence, accountability and financing for sustaining peace.

First, coherence requires strong coordination. Fragmentation is untenable and undermines the UN's effectiveness in this and other areas. We welcome the Secretary-General's initial decisions to address this. More must be done at all levels to improve coordination between Departments, between agencies, between field and headquarters, and between policy and programs.

The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review contained a welcome emphasis on the importance of sustaining peace and prevention, as an intellectual and practical lens through which to align headquarters and country approaches.

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations also has a vital role in implementing the sustaining peace agenda. UNDP and DPKO should continue to adopt new policies and practices for enhanced coherence and joint programs.

Second, on accountability, it is paramount to monitor progress and recognise success and failure. Independent, frank advice to the Security Council should be a key role for the Secretary-General and the Secretariat broadly. The little-used Article 99 should become a standard tool.

We welcome collaboration between the Department of Political Affairs, the Peacebuilding Support Office and UNDP to take forward pilot projects on Sustaining Peace in Sri Lanka and Burkina Faso. The lessons learned from these projects should shape new practices and policies for a coherent UN.

Finally, new financing approaches are long overdue. A fit-for-purpose UN must be financed in a way which stimulates the highest quality advice, personnel and action on the ground. This will ensure a nimble, innovative UN which responds to needs rather than corporate structures, to achieve action that lives up to our rhetoric.

The Secretary-General's report to the 72<sup>nd</sup> session of UNGA, called for in the Sustaining Peace resolutions, will be key, including its critical financing element. Investing in the existing peacebuilding architecture is also important, to ensure that crucial peacebuilding gaps are met. Australia's recent \$10 million commitment to the Peacebuilding Fund shows our confidence in this tool.

Mr President

In 2017, the sustaining peace agenda must be central to all our efforts. Australia welcomes the Secretary-General's leadership and urges the whole of the UN to come together to advance this agenda.