



**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION  
OF SOUTH AFRICA, DR NALEDI PANDOR, AT THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY  
COUNCIL  
DEBATE ON THE PANDEMICS AND SUSTAINING PEACE**

Madame President,

At a time when the world is only beginning to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and efforts are being made in various international forums to deal with the multitude of adverse impacts, we thank Indonesia, through you Minister Marsudi, for convening this Security Council debate prioritising sustaining peace in the midst of pandemics.

We also welcome the important and insightful briefings by the Secretary-General, António Guterres, Former Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon and Ms Sarah Cliffe, lending substantial weight to our discussion.

South Africa has had to learn many lessons from the pandemic. The critical need for international collaboration and robust multilateral institutions and the urgency of socio-economic assistance in sectors that should be giving support to the most vulnerable. We support the Security Council addressing the possible link between the pandemic and peace and security.

Madame President,

This multilateral approach which entails financial assistance is of utmost necessity given the intractable nature of global pandemics in general, as well as the complex array of challenges that emerge from such a pervasive global phenomenon. It requires us to be aware of how deeply interconnected our world is and how solidarity and cooperation are becoming more and more indispensable.

South Africa is deeply concerned by the potential adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on conflict situations that are currently the focus of the Council, particularly the potential to delay or reverse vital gains in peace and political processes. It is crucial for the international community to maintain its support to countries affected by conflict in order to preserve these gains and sustain investments directed at stabilisation and peace building.

Another such impact area, which will increasingly require more attention, is that of post-conflict reconstruction and sustaining the hard-won peace that has been achieved through the Council's

efforts and those of the broader international community over many years. We must not lose sight of what it has taken to assist those in conflict situations to extricate themselves from violence, destruction and insecurity, and what the adverse effects of renewed instability and the re-emergence of conflict would entail. This may be especially pronounced are to the adverse humanitarian impact of coping with conflict amidst a global pandemic.

In this regard, South Africa will continue to support the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and a humanitarian pause in order to focus due attention on the pandemic and attempts to mitigate its impacts, a call that has been reiterated and emphasised by the African Union.

We must, at this stage, acknowledge and commend the leadership and proactive action of the United Nations which put in place measures to protect the health and safety of peacekeepers and to help navigate the effects of the pandemic. In this effort we, especially commend, the leadership and critical role of the World Health Organisation and its Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, in preventing and mitigating the broader public health emergency in which peacekeeping and other peace related activities are embedded. The WHO has also been working with affected countries and regional organisations such as the African Union to address the spread of COVID-19, exemplifying a global cooperative effort.

Madame President

While it is important to focus on post-conflict support in all peacebuilding efforts, we must be wary not to provide support on the one hand while inhibiting the adequate responses of governments to protect their people from the pandemic and weather the economic difficulties and implications on the other. It is for this reason that South Africa strongly supports the UN Secretary-General's call for the waiving of unilateral coercive measures and sanctions in order to allow affected governments and societies to have the requisite resources to secure the much-needed life-saving and medical supplies, and personal protective equipment to respond to the pandemic. We also support calls for debt relief and deferral and robust support for recovery in Africa.

South Africa has consistently held the position that sanctions should be used to support peace processes and not as a means of collective punishment, which is made all the more devastating in the context of a pandemic that even the most capable economies have been struggling to deal with.

The notion of a comprehensive response to the pandemic, which includes both additional efforts and resources as well as how we can refine the engagement of the Security Council, such as related to sanctions, will be key in this Council's role in the broader global effort.

It is for this reason that South Africa sees the matter of sustaining peace in the context of global pandemics as requiring concurrently addressing the confluence of factors that determine the context for peace to endure in these trying times.

In conclusion, sustaining peace depends on the overall political, social, economic and physical health of societies. In addition, we inhabit a world which is increasingly global and interconnected. Therefore, we must come to terms with the necessity of prioritising sustainable peace through forums such as the UN Peace Building Commission in cooperation with regional organisations and their peacebuilding counterparts and mechanisms, while also drawing on a system wide UN multilateral effort. This is especially necessary as we work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals which aims to address the root causes of many conflicts we face.

It is only through cooperation in the face of temptation to look inward, that we will emerge from the current pandemic the better, and confront a new world with a renewed spirit of global cooperation.

I thank you