



**Statement**

**by**

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and  
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I take great pleasure in addressing this special group eager to engage in this unique opportunity to gain a better understanding of the United Nations, its structure and workings. I would like to congratulate and commend the United Nations Association – USA and its management for the wonderful and determined efforts to enhance global understanding and involve the students in the work of the United Nations.

Today's topic "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Regional Organizations" and the fostering regional cooperation has always been a subject high on the United Nations agenda as an effective manner in which to address the broad agenda of the international community.

As you are aware, the United Nations works to provide a forum for all nations to engage in dialogue and in this manner to preserve peace throughout the world, to develop and maintain friendly relations between nations, to work together to help better people's lives, to eliminate poverty, disease and illiteracy in the world, to stop environmental destruction and to encourage respect for each other's rights and freedoms. It cannot do this alone and in isolation, and this is the point where fostering regional initiatives and working in cooperation with regional organizations took hold.

We all know that the threats of terrorism, organized crime, corruption, trafficking in drugs and human beings are not new, but their magnitude and opportunities for proliferation are unprecedented as globalization advances. Nowadays, the security challenges faced by States are evolving rapidly, whereby one can cross borders and kill hundreds of thousands, destabilizing the global economy in its wake. No longer can States on their own effectively counter the array of new threats with which they may be confronted.

It is understandable that this august body cannot address this multitude of issues without relying on cooperating with regional organizations. The United Nations operates at the global level while the regional organizations address issues at the regional level. This is where they have the comparative advantage, because of their proximity and a deeper knowledge of their political and economical environment.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is embedded in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. Regional efforts are a central complement to international initiatives and action by the United Nations. Regional organizations are important partners of the United Nations, as each organization has its particular role and expertise and the United Nations will achieve its objective of economic and social development, as well as of peace and security through this partnership with regional organizations.

Over the years, the Organization developed and fine-tuned its mechanisms for cooperation including consultations. The first two meetings between the UN and regional organizations in 1994 and 1996 established the principles that guide their cooperation, considered practical and more effective ways of working together. The fifth high-level meeting of the United Nations and Regional Organizations, held in July 2003 at UNHQs,

discussed the main challenges to international peace and security facing the world today, including international terrorism, poverty, as well as intra and inter-State conflicts, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime and violations of human rights”. Terrorism was recognized as today’s major challenge to international peace and security.

### **Cooperation for economic and social development**

The regional extensions of the UN are the five Regional Commissions located in Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific and in Western Asia. They have been instrumental in fostering and supporting cooperation for economic and social development for decades. Additionally, the Specialized Agencies focus on various Sectoral areas and develop synergies with the Regional Commissions. Together, the Regional Commissions and the specialized agencies constitute the extended arms of the United Nations in its cooperation with regional organizations.

Regional development banks have been playing an increasingly important role in the economic and social development of their respective regions. They foster economic growth and fight poverty in their regional member countries. As regional institutions, they are well positioned to take advantage of their closeness to their clients and their expertise in the region. The regional banks strive to avoid unnecessary overlap in assistance and respect the principle of country ownership in order to maximize their development impact. They try to mainstream dialogue with developing member countries, civil societies, the private sector, and other stakeholders into its operations. The African, Asian and Latin American development banks are becoming “heavyweights” in regional development financing.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) is an important source of funding to its regional members as they strive to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Bank Group has mobilized considerable resources to finance the development efforts of its low-income regional member countries. Since 1997, the African Development Fund (ADF), the concessional window of the Bank Group, has raised some \$13.4 billion from ADF donors. In this connection, the tenth replenishment of the Fund (ADF-X) -- covering the period 2005-07 – was concluded last December with a pledge of \$5.4 billion, the highest in the history of the Fund. In addition, the Bank Group has mobilized a further \$4 billion from the donor community to finance its debt relief operations under the HIPC Initiative.

In addition to its regular operations and to assist its regional member countries face new challenges, the Bank has recently launched a number of new initiatives:

- \* **First**, to help countries achieve the MDG for water and sanitation, the Bank has embarked on its *Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative (RWSSI)*. This has the objective of accelerating access to sustainable safe water supply and basic sanitation in rural Africa, aiming to reach coverage of 80 per cent by 2015.

- \* **Second**, to help post-conflict countries clear their arrears with the Bank Group and help them re-engage with the international community -- as well as begin their reconstruction efforts -- the Bank Group has established a Post-Conflict Countries Facility (PCCF) with resources mobilized from the net income of the Bank and from the African Development Fund. Two countries – Burundi and Congo – have benefited from the Facility and the Bank Group has started its regular operations in these countries.
- \* **Third**, at the request of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Heads of State Implementation Committee, the Bank has assumed a leadership role in regional infrastructure and banking and financial standards and is also working closely with the ECA on governance issues. In addition, it is providing technical support to the NEPAD African Peer Review Mechanism. In regional infrastructure, it has drawn up a short term action plan, with investment costs estimated at \$8 billion. A number of projects have already been approved, and approximately \$2 billion has been mobilized, with over \$500 million from the Bank’s own resources.
- \* **Fourth**, the Bank has adopted a new strategy to promote private sector development. The new policy adopts a more holistic approach by providing support to the strengthening of the environment for private sector development, promoting indigenous entrepreneurship -- with a particular focus on small and medium enterprises -- and supporting public-private partnerships.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB), dedicated to the development of Asia and the Pacific for more than thirty years, adopted a strategy that placed poverty reduction at the center of its operations. As you are aware, Asia and the Pacific have achieved unprecedented economic growth during the period. As sustained economic growth is indispensable for poverty reduction, the Asian economic success has brought about a higher standard of living and poverty reduction and tripled per capita income. The ADB plays an important role in a variety of regional development programs, such as regional infrastructure projects and regional public goods.

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) was created to "contribute to the harmonious economic growth and development of the member countries in the Caribbean and to promote economic co-operation and integration among them, having special and urgent regard to the needs of the less developed members of the region."

In addition to regional development banks, numerous other kinds of regional and subregional organizations have been established to bring about deeper and broader levels of economic integration and social development in their respective regions or subregions. These organizations include, among others, the African Union, the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for

Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the East African Community (EAC) etc...

At times, regional cooperation develops in the course of implementing a particular project. In the field of transport, some examples are the World Bank's efforts on implementing the Almaty Programme of Action, like in Kenya, where the Northern Corridor Transport Improvement Project, now at the final appraisal stage, aims at facilitating international transport operation on the Kenyan section of the corridor, which provides access to Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Or the regional West Africa Transport Project which is under preparation in West Africa, in close cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). This project may involve up to fifteen countries at its final stage, all members of ECOWAS, to ensure improvement of road conditions, facilitation of border-crossing operations, and implementation of inter-regional transit agreements.

We can find an example of inter-regional cooperation in ESCAP implementing the project "Capacity-building for developing interregional land and land-cum-sea transport linkages" together with the four other regional commissions. ESCAP is involved in two main components of the project: Europe-Asia (with ECE) and Europe-Middle East-Asia (with the Economic Commission for West Asia and ECE). ESCAP has been also working closely with the Economic Commission of Europe (ECE) on the inter-regional transport linkage between Asia and Europe. Other agencies, such as the ECE, ADB, and Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECAs) have also joined it to ensure that these barriers are reduced and eventually eliminated. SPECAs is having a ministerial level meeting next week in Astana, Kazakhstan with participation of all member-states and heads of UN regional commissions.

### **Cooperation towards peace and security,**

The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a drastic increase both in quality and quantity in the number of UN peacekeeping operations which strained the organization's resources and capacity. In response to these developments and in the broader context of improving conflict management, "An Agenda for Peace" postulated regional organizations could make contributions to solve conflicts. One of the annexes outlined the different forms that cooperation between the UN and regional organizations could take, in this regard, such as consultation, diplomatic support, operational support, co-deployment and joint operations. Some illustrative examples are:

**Consultation:** To exchange views on conflicts that both the UN and the regional organizations may be trying to solve. Consultation can be formal, with periodic reports made to the General Assembly; in other cases, it is less formal, with the Secretary-General calling consultative meetings with the heads of all regional organizations and arrangements cooperating with the UN. Recently, the General Assembly invited the international community to consider supporting the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in the area in the effective

establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), the Central African early warning system, MARAC (Mécanisme d'alerte rapide de l'Afrique centrale), and the Multinational Force for Central Africa (FOMAC).

**Diplomatic Support:** Regional organizations have participated in the peace-making activities of the UN that have led to the establishment of peacekeeping operations and supported them by diplomatic initiatives. The African Union (AU), the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) played this role in supporting the UN efforts in Somalia. In November 2003, the meeting with the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF) led to strengthen the collaboration between the two organizations. In Côte d'Ivoire, the UN and OIF are cooperating within the international Follow-up Committee established pursuant to the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and combining their efforts to promote reconciliation between the various parties of Côte d'Ivoire. In the Comoros, under the auspices of the African Union, OIF and the United Nations made a significant contribution to the conclusion of the Agreement of 20 December 2003.

**Operational Support:** This cooperation varies according to the requirements on the ground. One example was the provision by NATO of air power to support the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslavia; although NATO does not consider itself a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII. Another was the support provided by the NATO-led multinational Implementation Force/Stabilization Force (IFOR/SFOR) to the United Nations.

**Co-deployment:** UN field missions have been deployed in conjunction with the peacekeeping forces of ECOWAS in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Georgia and Tajikistan. This model has again been followed in Bosnia and Herzegovina where the UN and regional organizations and arrangements are co-deployed with different mandates, but for the common purpose of bringing peace and stability to the country:

**Joint Operations :** In Haiti, the UN and the Organization of American States (OAS) jointly launched the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) for which the staffing, direction and financing were to be shared between the UN and the OAS. This arrangement has worked and is also possible future model that need careful assessment.

The number of participating organizations is growing constantly, thus reflecting the increased importance that regionalism has in international affairs. Without effective regional and other partners the United Nations' ability to address issues particular to a region, would not be all encompassing. Regional efforts are a central complement to international initiatives and action by the United Nations. Regional organizations are important partners of the United Nations, as each organization has its particular role and know-how.

These new mechanisms are evolving, and they require further improvement. For example, while the AU created its own Conflict Management Mechanism, its relationship to the UN operations has yet to be clarified. Only one regional organization in Africa has been involved regularly in peace operations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Military Observer Group (ECOMOG). In the last ten years, ECOMOG has intervened militarily on three separate occasions: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau, but unlike Europe, Africa does not have a well-developed collective defense organization with an integrated command and control structure.

In the Pacific Region, consultations continued to be held on a regular basis at various levels between United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) officials. The Secretary-General welcomed the initiative to deploy in July 2003 the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon (RAMSI).

Among the regions, Europe hosts the best prepared and best equipped regional security organization. Although trained for war during the last fifty years, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was never forced to fight. What seems to be emerging now is an interesting division of labour between NATO and the UN, driven primarily by the large amount of force at the disposal of the North Atlantic Council. In Bosnia and Kosovo, NATO provided the entirety of the military force while the UN has provided the civil administration to help rebuild war torn areas.

The cooperation between the UN and regional organizations lead to genuine progress in the United Nations' ability to coordinate various initiatives and efforts as well as to maximize their impact. The central role of the United Nations in setting the framework for international action has been crucial. It has been amply demonstrated that regional organizations make significant contributions toward the promotion economic and social development as well as peace and security.

The world's increasing interdependence also increases its vulnerability, as borders cannot easily stop the movements of terrorists, warlords, small arms, refugees, narcotics, diseases or other hazards. The Secretary-General therefore continues to encourage closer and more effective and efficient cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

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