

4 May 2015

High-Level Thematic Debate on Strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations

The High-level Thematic Debate on Strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations was an occasion to reflect on the strides made and opportunities ahead. Cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations remains a cornerstone of the work of the UN. Regional and sub-regional organizations continue to play pivotal roles in the areas of peace and security, human rights and development. Over the years, cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations has intensified.

The UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) Outcome document entitled “The Future We Want”, emphasizes that regional and sub-regional organizations “have a significant role to play in promoting a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their respective regions”. It underscored the need to support these institutions, including through the UN system, in supporting sustainable development. The regional and sub-regional organizations were also urged to prioritize sustainable development through, inter alia, implementation of regional agreements and arrangements, exchange of information, best practices, and lessons learnt.

As Member States and stakeholders formulate the post-2015 development agenda, regional and sub-regional organizations have an important contribution to make including in its implementation.

CONCEPT NOTE

High -level Thematic Debate of the General Assembly on “Strengthening Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional and sub-regional organizations”

4 May 2015, Trusteeship Council

Background

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations has remained a cornerstone of the work of the United Nations as recognized in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Regional and sub-regional organisations have have continued to play pivotal roles in their respective regions in areas of peace and security, human rights and development. Over the years, cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations has intensified.

In the Outcome of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) entitled “The Future We Want”, Heads of State and Government and Leaders of delegations emphasized that regional and sub-regional organizations “have a significant role to play in promoting a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their respective regions” and underscored the need to support these institutions, including through the UN system, in the effective operationalization and implementation of sustainable development. The regional and sub-regional organizations were also urged to prioritize sustainable development through, inter alia, implementation of regional agreements and arrangements as appropriate, and exchange of information, best practices, and lessons learnt.

Strengthening cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations remains even more important today given the magnitude and complexity of challenges facing the international community.

The United Nations and regional organizations in many ways have unique and complimentary capacities that when properly coordinated, can produce good results. This cooperation now plays a critical role in virtually every area of the Organization’s mandate. These relationships have been strengthened and deepened in recent years across a wide spectrum in the three pillars of United Nations work namely; peace and security, human rights and development. These organizations are invaluable for the UN and enhance the effectiveness of the UN on conflict prevention, mediation efforts, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development related issues

Strengthening these partnerships is important in promoting the principle of comparative advantages, complementarity and burden-sharing. There has been a track record of tangible results when the United Nations has worked closely with regional and sub-regional organizations. These organizations have unique understanding and deeper knowledge of situations in their respective regions owing to their geographic proximity. They also have a compelling interest and a better knowledge of different parties on the ground and can leverage this local knowledge, relationships and resources to support conflict prevention, resolution, post-conflict recovery and stabilization efforts. The United Nations has also got extensive experience and capacities that that can be shared with regional and sub-regional organizations.

There are many examples of this evolving relationship. Cooperation between the UN the African Union (AU) has been pioneering and most visible in the area of peace and security. The United Nations has also forged partnerships with other regional and sub-regional organizations around the world. These include the; European Union (EU), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN); League of Arab States (LAS), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Organization of American States (OAS), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, among others.

Beyond cooperation between the United Nations and a regional and sub-regional organisation, recent experiences have demonstrated the increasingly important value of trilateral cooperation between the UN and more than one regional organisation. An example is the UN, AU and EU cooperation in the area of peace and security in countries like Somalia, Mali and the Central African Republic.

As the post-2015 development agenda is formulated, regional and sub-regional organizations have an important contribution to make including in its implementation.

Going forward there are lessons to be learnt from the past and the present cooperation for concrete actions to be taken to building more effective partnerships between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations, drawing on their respective strengths. Doing so will facilitate the implementation of their mandates and the overall objectives of the United Nations as enshrined in the Charter.

Objective

The main objective of the High-level thematic debate is to provide a platform for participants to exchange views on:

- i) What concrete measures can be taken to build and strengthen strategic partnerships between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations?
- ii) What needs to be done to strengthen mechanisms to promote common understanding and effective coordination across a range of issues including conflict prevention and mediation?
- iii) How regional and sub-regional organizations can secure human, logistical and financing in a predictable and sustainable manner?
- iv) How to galvanize international support towards building the capacities of regional and sub-regional organizations in conflict prevention and resolution, peacemaking, peacebuilding and development?
- v) What actions need to be taken to foster cooperation and experience-sharing amongst the regional and sub-regional organizations, especially in the areas of mediation and peaceful settlement of disputes?
- vi) How regional and sub-regional organizations can be engaged and mobilized to play an effective role in the implementation of a transformative post-2015 development agenda?

Format and Outcome

The High-level Thematic debate will consist of an opening segment and two consecutive interactive panels in the afternoon. One Panel will discuss “Enhancing the strategic relationship between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations in the areas of peace, stability and human rights”. The second panel will discuss “Galvanizing support of regional and sub-regional organizations for the implementation of a transformative post-2015 development agenda”. The Outcome will be a negotiated Declaration to be adopted by the General Assembly. A provisional programme will be availed in due course.

Participants

Member States will be invited to participate at the highest possible level. Representatives of UN Agencies, regional and sub-regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders will also be invited to attend.

Provisional Programme

High-Level Thematic Debate

Strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations

4 May 2015, Trusteeship Council Chamber

Morning	
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	<p><u>Opening Segment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Mr. Sam K. Kutesa, President of the United Nations General Assembly• H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations <p><u>Keynote speaker</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Mr. Yoweri Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	<p><u>Plenary Segment:</u></p> <p><i>This Session will focus on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How to further enhance the cooperation and strategic partnership between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations?</i> <p><i>Statements by Ministers, Heads of regional and sub-regional organizations and high-level speakers (7 minutes each)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>H.E. Mr. Fred Mitchell, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Bahamas, Representing the Chair of the Caribbean Community</i>• <i>H.E. Mr. Georges Rebelo Chikoti, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Angola and Chair of ICGLR</i>• <i>H.E. Mrs. Annika Soder, Vice Minister and State Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Sweden</i>• <i>H.E. Mr. Dieudonné Nzengue, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Francophony and regional Integration of Gabon</i>• <i>H.E. Mrs. Carmen Liliana Burlacu, Secretary of State for Global Affairs of Romania</i>• <i>H.E. Dr. Nabil El Araby, Secretary-General of the Arab League</i>• <i>H.E. Amb. Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe</i>• <i>H.E. Mr. Iyad Ameen Madani, Secretary-General, Organization of Islamic Cooperation</i>• <i>H.E. Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy-Chairperson, African Union Commission</i>• <i>H.E. Amb. Albert Ramdin, Assistant Secretary-General of the Organization of American States</i>• <i>H.E. Mr. Alain Le Roy, Secretary-General, European External Action Service</i> <p><i>Statements/interventions by Member States and stakeholders (3 minutes each)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Members Speaking on behalf of groups</i>

<i>Afternoon</i>	
3:00 p.m.- 4:30 p.m.	<p><u>Interactive panel 1</u></p> <p>Strengthening the strategic cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations in the three pillars of the UN system, namely: peace and security, human rights and development</p> <p>Moderator: H.E. Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under Secretary-General for United Nations Department of Political Affairs</p> <p><u>Panellists</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy-Chairperson, African Union Commission (tbc) • Dr. Molefi Kete Asante, Professor of African-American Studies, Temple University • Mr. Peter Van Tuijl, Executive Director, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict • Mr. Danile Yifru, Director, Peace and Security and Senior Advisor, Intergovernmental Authority on Development • Ms. Lyazzat Kaltayeva, Association of Women with Disabilities <p>Interactive discussion and remarks by Member States and other Stakeholders (2-3 minutes)</p>
4:35 p.m.- 5:50 p.m.	<p><u>Interactive panel 2</u></p> <p>Galvanizing support of regional and sub-regional organizations towards the implementation of a transformative post-2015 development agenda</p> <p>Moderator: H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić, President, Center for International Relations and Sustainable Development</p> <p><u>Panellists</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Alicia Barcena Ibarra, Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean • Dr. Carlos Lopes, Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa • Mr. David Steven, Senior Fellow and Associate Director, Center on International Cooperation • Mr. Ali Shahbaz, Sustainable Development Policy Institute <p>Interactive discussion and remarks by Member States and other Stakeholders (2-3 minutes)</p>
5:50 p.m.- 6:00 p.m.	<p><u>Closing Segment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Sam K. Kutesa, President of the United Nations General Assembly

******* The Outcome of this High-level Thematic Debate will be a Negotiated Political Declaration that will be adopted on 5 May 2015**



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

10 April 2015

Excellency

I refer to my letter dated 24 February 2015 forwarding the Concept Note for the High- Level Thematic Debate on Strengthening Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations. I have the honour to submit a draft Declaration that will be negotiated as the outcome of the high-level debate.

The first informal meeting at experts' level to discuss the draft Declaration is scheduled for 20 April 2015. The time and venue will be communicated in the Journal.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam K. Kutesa', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sam K. Kutesa

All Permanent Representatives
and Permanent Observers
to the United Nations
New York

Draft Political Declaration on Strengthening Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional and sub-regional organizations

President's text

The General Assembly,

Recalling the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, all relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and resolutions and presidential statements of the Security Council related to cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Adopts the following political declaration:

Draft Political Declaration on Strengthening Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional and sub-regional organizations

We, high-level representatives of Member States and observers meeting in New York on 4 May 2015, declare that the High-Level Thematic Debate on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations constitutes an important opportunity to further build upon and enhance the strategic partnership between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations. *We therefore:*

1. *Welcome* the ongoing efforts to strengthen the cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations towards a more effective and efficient partnership.
2. *Underscore* the important role that regional and sub-regional organizations play, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, in the areas of peace and security, development and human rights. *Recognize* that these organizations are well positioned to understand the challenges and dynamics facing their respective regions given their geographic, cultural and historical proximity, as well as information about specific local and conflict situations within their mandates, and contribute to the prevention and resolution of such conflicts.
3. *Underscore also* that the cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations has over the years produced tangible results. Strengthening these partnerships is strategic for promoting the principle of comparative advantage and complementarity.

4. *Reaffirm* our determination and commitment to support efforts to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations in addressing challenges facing their respective regions and the international community. *Recognize* that fostering cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations is a common and shared objective requiring an integrated and balanced approach in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and particularly with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.
5. *Encourage* all Member States to promote and support strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations given the magnitude and complexity of challenges facing the international community and, *inter alia*, galvanize international support towards building the capacities of regional and sub-regional organizations in early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, peacemaking and peacebuilding.
6. *Recognize* that in cases when regional or sub-regional organizations deploy peacekeeping operations authorized by the Security Council, they contribute towards maintenance of international peace and security, consistent with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, and *underscore* the need to support such efforts through provision of predictable and sustainable financing on a case-by-case basis.
7. *Reiterate* strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and *call upon* the United Nations in cooperation with the regional and sub-regional organizations to enhance partnership and support efforts to combat terrorism in its forms and manifestations.
8. *Reaffirm* that regional and sub-regional organizations, as well as the United Nations regional commissions and their sub-regional offices, have a significant role to play in promoting a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their respective regions. In this regard, *encourage* increased cooperation among regional and sub-regional organizations, including in the area of technical assistance and information sharing.

9. *Invite* Member States, the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations to further intensify their efforts to promote freedom and respect for all human rights, gender equality and women empowerment, rule of law and the overall commitment to just and democratic societies.

10. *Reaffirm* our commitment to strengthening international cooperation to address the persistent challenges related to sustainable development, through achieving sustained and inclusive growth, the promotion of social equity and eradication of poverty as well as the environmental sustainability, in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. *Underscore* the need to support regional and sub-regional organizations, including through the United Nations system, in the effective operationalization and implementation of sustainable development.

11. *Stress* the importance of cooperation and partnerships of regional and sub-regional organizations with the United Nations as well as with each other and *encourage* them to regularly hold dialogue on how to further strengthen cooperation, exchange views, information and lessons learned and to improve cooperation, coordination, coherence and complementarity within their mandates.

12. *Commend* the President of the General Assembly at its 69th session for convening this high-level meeting and all Member States and regional and sub-regional organizations for their contributions and participation in the high-level thematic debate.

4 May 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the High-level Thematic Debate on Strengthening
cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-
regional organizations**

**Your Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President
of the Republic of Uganda,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Heads of Regional and Sub-regional organizations,
Distinguished delegates and participants
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this High-level Thematic Debate on Strengthening and Enhancing Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional and Sub-regional Organizations.

I welcome, in a special way, His Excellency Yoweri Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, who will be delivering a Keynote Address; the Honourable Ministers from Angola, Bahamas, Gabon, Sweden, Romania and Uganda; and the Heads of Regional and Sub-regional organizations for joining us here today. Your participation in this event demonstrates the great importance you attach to this issue.

I also commend His Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations for his personal commitment and dedication to promoting and strengthening cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations.

Strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations has been one of my key priorities for this session of the General Assembly.

Excellencies,

Over the past 70-years, the scope and breadth of activities undertaken by the United Nations in the areas of peace and security, development and human rights, have greatly expanded. Globally, we are facing numerous and complex challenges including poverty, unemployment, inequality, conflicts, climate change, and emerging threats, such as terrorism and extremism, to mention a few.

The United Nations continues to cooperate with regional and sub-regional organizations to address these challenges, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. Cooperation with these organizations has been further expounded in several resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

To-date, over 25 regional and sub-regional organizations have established formal cooperative relationships with the United Nations.

Today's thematic debate provides a unique opportunity to focus on three key issues:

- i) How do we strengthen these important strategic partnerships?
- ii) What needs to be done to build and enhance the capacities of regional and sub-regional organizations in conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, promotion of the rule of law, human rights and development, among other areas?
- iii) How do we ensure that regional and sub-regional organizations play an effective role in supporting the implementation of a transformative post-2015 development agenda?

Excellencies,

This debate is taking place as the formulation of a universal, transformative post-2015 development agenda is underway. Ultimately, the implementation of the new agenda will be done on the ground – in our regions, countries and communities.

Given their in-depth understanding of their respective regions as well as their geographic proximity to challenging environments, regional and sub-regional organizations are often uniquely positioned to understand the particular local dynamics and root causes of those challenges.

Indeed, in these changing times, the distinctive role regional and sub-regional organizations can play in addressing some of the world's most persistent challenges is as important as ever. These organizations are already addressing many of these challenges under the three pillars of the United Nations. In doing so, and in cooperation with the United Nations, they enhance and complement its effectiveness.

There are many examples of successful cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations we can draw upon, with the African Union, the Association of the South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union (EU), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Organization of American States (OAS), the League of Arab States, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), among others.

While significant progress has been made, much more remains to be done to further strengthen cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,**

We should build on the lessons of our past and current experiences to create ever more innovative and flexible partnership arrangements that draw on respective strengths, while encouraging expanded cooperation and dialogue.

These organizations continue to make a significant contribution, but several of them remain constrained by lack of financial, technical and logistical resources.

It is incumbent upon us to find ways of ensuring predictable and sustainable financing for regional and sub-regional organizations, especially in cases where they undertake peacekeeping operations under a UN mandate.

I invite you all to identify concrete proposals for addressing these challenges. The Outcome of this debate will be a Political Declaration to be adopted by the General Assembly.

I thank you for your attention.

4 May 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Closing of the High-level Thematic Debate on Strengthening
cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-
regional organizations**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates and participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I thank your Excellencies, distinguished panellists and participants for the valuable contributions during this high-level thematic debate.

Throughout the day, participants expressed their support for promoting and enhancing greater cooperation and partnership between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations.

Many speakers stressed that the interconnectivity of our modern-day world implies that no single country can respond to regional or global challenges alone. To deal with a multitude of challenges including poverty, conflict, violence, rising inequality, climate change, and disasters, to mention a few, we need collective efforts and action.

Indeed, the work of the United Nations in the three pillars of the work of the United Nations peace and security, development, and human rights, can be effectively advanced with tangible results through strengthened cooperation and partnerships.

There is wide recognition that regional and sub-regional organizations are well-placed to respond to emerging conflicts given their proximity and unique knowledge of local dynamics.

It has also been noted that such partnerships are strategic for promoting the principles of complementarity, burden sharing and comparative advantage.

It was noted that Regional and Sub-regional organizations will have an important role to play in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, as well as addressing climate change.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

During our discussions, participants also highlighted the existence of some structural defects inherent in the multilateral system, including within the United Nations, and called for reforms with a view to increasing its efficiency and effectiveness.

Speakers also noted the need for the United Nations to take into account the views and decisions of regional organizations, and underscored the importance of ensuring they have adequate resources for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

The need to ensure flexible, predictable and sustainable funding for peacekeeping missions undertaken by Regional and Sub-regional organizations under a UN mandate was underscored by participants.

Others emphasized the importance of creating stronger synergies and avoiding duplication of efforts and resources when building strategic partnerships between the United Nations and Regional and Sub-regional organizations.

Many participants also stressed the need to improve coordination and lines of communication between the United Nations and regional partners, as well as among Regional and Sub-regional organizations themselves.

It was also underscored that the voices of civil society are critical in addressing local, national, regional and international challenges. Given the vulnerabilities of women in conflict and non-conflict situations, the importance of ensuring that they are empowered and actively involved in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding and recovery, was stressed.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

The outcome of this debate is a Political Declaration on Strengthening Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional and Sub-regional Organizations.

I would like to thank all delegations for your contribution to the declaration, which has already been agreed upon and will be adopted by the General Assembly tomorrow morning. This is an important step in advancing and strengthening strategic partnerships between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations.

As we conclude our debate today, let me again express my appreciation for your valuable contributions on this topic.

I thank you for your attention.