

4 May 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> 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.