

## 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.