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40. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held four meetings, and adopted one resolution and two presidential statements on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security. In those meetings, the Council focused on the relationship of the United Nations with the African Union, the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and other regional organizations from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The table at the end of the section lists the meetings at which this item was considered, and gives information on, inter alia, invitees, speakers and decisions adopted.

Debate on strengthening the relationship with regional organizations, in particular the African Union

At the outset of the meeting of the Council, on 12 January 2012,¹ the President of South Africa dwelled on lessons drawn from the situation in Libya and affirmed that greater political coherence and a common vision between the African Union and the United Nations were critical to the resolution of African conflicts. Based on the decade-

¹ See concept note circulated by South Africa, [S/2012/13](#).

long experience of cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations, he offered a series of proposals, such as, on the institutionalization of the relationship between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, the development and definition of modalities for cooperation and decision-making between the two organs, a clear division of labour between the two organizations, and capacity-building and sustainable resource allocation.²

The Secretary-General, in his turn, said that the collective efforts of the United Nations and the African Union in conflict prevention and mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding were making a real difference throughout the continent, and highlighted examples of this strengthened partnership.³ The Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union underlined that both traditional and new threats required concerted responses by the two organizations and a much closer partnership, based on “a creative reading of the provisions of Chapter VIII” of the Charter. He specifically mentioned the need for the two organizations to agree on a set of principles aimed at clarifying the relationship and anchoring it on a more solid platform, such as, among others, the support for African ownership and priority-setting.⁴ Echoing the previous speaker, the Chair of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union offered a series of reflections on “innovative ways of interpreting Chapter VIII” of the Charter that would add value, improve the relationship and optimize the chances of achieving sustainable peace. In this regard, he highlighted issues that required measures of improvement, namely the process of decision-making, particularly in determining when and how to engage in specific crisis situations, the gap between the requirements of an operation and the resources available, institutional relations, differences in the approach to deployment in fragile environments, and capacity-building.⁵

² [S/PV.6702](#), pp. 3-4.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁶ [S/PV.6702 \(Resumption 1\)](#), p.10

In the debate that ensued, speakers generally acknowledged the progress made and the challenges remaining in the relationship between the United Nations and the African Union in the maintenance of international peace and security.

At the meeting, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2033 \(2012\)](#), in which it encouraged the improvement of regular interaction, consultation and coordination between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council on matters of mutual interest. Following the vote, the representative of the United Kingdom noted that while his country commended the cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, it did not believe that such cooperation should come at the expense of the Security Council's primacy with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security or its practical capacity to speedily and effectively respond to any threat to international peace and security.⁶

Cooperation with the European Union

In her briefing to the Council on 13 February 2012 the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union outlined the contribution of the European Union to international peace and security. First, she highlighted the ability of the European Union to marshal a comprehensive approach, exemplified by the European involvement in Somalia and Mali, where security measures were accompanied by development cooperation. Secondly, she mentioned the involvement of the European Union in international negotiations, including mediation, on behalf of the international community and underlined her role in dealing with the Iranian nuclear issue and in facilitating the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo. She also featured the work of the European Union with partners to address some of the more difficult challenges to international peace and security, such as the violations of international law by the

⁶ [S/PV.6702 \(Resumption 1\)](#), p.10

Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the conflict in Syria and the Middle East peace process.⁷

Most speakers welcomed the contribution of the European Union to international peace and security.⁸ Some speakers also highlighted the active role that it played on the issue of children and armed conflict.⁹ The representative of Togo cautioned against overlapping actions, and said that it was important for both organizations to bear in mind what the other was doing before making a new commitment.¹⁰

Open debate with regional organizations from Africa, Asia and Latin America

At the outset of the meeting of the Council, on 6 August 2013, the President pointed out that the last time the Council had held a debate from a broader perspective on the relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations had been on 13 January 2010. She underscored that the primary objective of the debate was to consider the role of regional and subregional organizations, exploring the options to strengthen the bilateral relationships between the United Nations and the spectrum of regional and subregional organizations and arrangements.¹¹

The Council then issued a presidential statement, in which it expressed its intention to consider further steps to promote closer and more operational cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the fields of early warning, prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.¹² In his briefing after the adoption the Secretary-General expressed his belief in the value of combining the deep knowledge, unique insights and strong local networks of regional and subregional organizations with the universal membership and legitimacy, long

⁷ [S/PV.6919](#), pp. 2-4.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5 (France); p. 6 (Azerbaijan); p. 7 (Luxembourg); p. 9 (Australia); p. 10 (Guatemala); p. 11 (China); p. 14 (United Kingdom); p. 18 (Morocco); pp. 19-20 (United States); and p. 21 (Republic of Korea)

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6 (France); p. 8 (Luxembourg); p. 17 (Argentina); and p. 21 (Rwanda).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹¹ [S/PV.7015](#), p. 2. See also concept note circulated by Argentina, [S/2013/446](#).

¹² [S/PRST/2013/12](#).

experience and operational capacity of the United Nations in the area of international peace and security.¹³

The representative of Cuba, speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that it was the first time the organization he represented participated in a debate of the Security Council. In his view, regional and subregional organizations had an essential role to play in conformity with Chapter VIII of the Charter.¹⁴ The representative of Ethiopia, speaking on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union, noted with appreciation the increased cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction, and mentioned the signing and implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in the Sudan, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) as examples of such cooperation. However, he also pointed to areas with a need for greater cooperation, namely, in relation to predictable, sustainable and flexible funding for African Union peace-support missions authorized by the Security Council, as well as in connection with consultation and effective coordination between the two organizations.¹⁵ The representative of Peru spoke on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). While highlighting the activities of UNASUR in the field of peace and security, he recognized the primary role that the Charter entrusted to the Security Council in this respect, as well as the complementary role played by regional bodies.¹⁶ Against the backdrop of the decisions adopted by the League of Arab States on a number of Middle East issues and the inability of the Council to adopt resolutions on these same issues, the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations called for an end to this “controversial trend” and to “seriously” consider decisions of regional organizations. He argued that frequently changing situations and crises required strengthened cooperation and the accelerated adoption and implementation by the

¹³ [S/PV.7015](#), p. 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Security Council of decisions taken by regional organizations.¹⁷ After the briefings, participants in the open debate identified success stories and challenges in the collaboration between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

Partnership with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

In his briefing to the Council on 28 October 2013, the Secretary-General said that the United Nations and the OIC were working closely on issues ranging from conflict prevention and conflict resolution to counter-terrorism, from human rights and humanitarian affairs to intercultural dialogue and sustainable development. He made reference to the collaboration between the United Nations and the OIC on a wide range of matters, such as the conflict in Syria, the Middle East peace process, the path of reform in Myanmar, the transition in Afghanistan, the situation in Mali, the peace process in Sudan, and the issue of terrorism. He welcomed the significant progress achieved in the strategic dialogue between the two organizations, including through formal partnership agreements and joint workplans, staff exchanges and joint mediation deployments.¹⁸

The Secretary-General of the OIC informed the Council on his organization's efforts in the maintenance of peace and security, conflict prevention and conflict resolution. He also underlined the contribution of the OIC to the work of the United Nations in a broad range of areas, and mentioned that the United Nations-OIC general biannual consultation meeting had provided an opportunity to identify all areas of cooperation with a specific time frame for implementation.¹⁹

Council members generally welcomed the collaboration between the two organizations.²⁰ Echoing the Secretary-General of the OIC, speakers highlighted the fact that the OIC was working on many issues also on the agenda of the Security Council.²¹

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁸ [S/PV.7050](#), pp. 2-3.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

²⁰ See also concept note circulated by Azerbaijan, [S/2013/588](#).

²¹ [S/PV.7050](#), p. 7 (Azerbaijan); p. 12 (Australia); p. 13 (Pakistan); and p. 22 (Russian Federation).

Several participants also mentioned the importance of dialogue between religions and of respect for religious diversity.²²

At the meeting, the Council adopted a presidential statement, in which it recognized and further encouraged the active contribution of the OIC to the work of the United Nations and acknowledged the continuing dialogue between the United Nations and the OIC in the fields of peacemaking, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.²³

²² Ibid., p. 6 (Secretary-General of OIC); p. 8 (Azerbaijan); p. 9 (Morocco); p. 11 (Rwanda); p. 11 (Luxembourg); p. 13 (Australia); p. 13 (Pakistan); p. 15 (Guatemala); p. 17 (United Kingdom); p. 19 (Togo); p. 20 (France); and p. 22 (Russian Federation).

²³ [S/PRST/2013/16](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/1306_S/PRST/2013/16.html).

Meetings: Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decisions and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.6702 S/PV.6702 (Resumption 1) 12 January 2012	Strengthening the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations-African Union cooperation in peace and security (S/2011/805) Letter dated 4 January 2012 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2012/13) Letter dated 9 January 2012 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2012/20)	Draft resolution submitted by Colombia, India, Pakistan, South Africa, Togo (S/2012/25).	Ethiopia, Kenya (Minister for Foreign Affairs) and Nigeria ^a	Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union (AU)	Secretary-General, all Council members and all invitees ^b	Resolution 2033 (2012) 15-0-0
S/PV.6919 13 February 2013	European Union			High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union	All Council members invitee	
S/PV.7015 S/PV.7015 (Resumption 1) 6 August 2013	Letter dated 1 August 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2013/446)	S/PRST/2010/1	38 member states ^c	Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, Secretary-General of the Organization of America States (OAS), Deputy Head of the Delegation of	Secretary-General, all Council members and all invitees ^d	S/PRST/2013/12

the European Union
to the United
Nations

[S/PV.7050](#) Strengthening the partnership synergy between
28 October 2013 the United Nations and the Organization of
Islamic Cooperation

Letter dated 3 October 2013 from the
Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-
General ([S/2013/588](#))

Secretary-General of Secretary-General, [S/PRST/2013/16](#)
to the Organization of all Council members
Islamic Cooperation and invitee
(OIC)

^a Kenya (as Chair of the AU Peace and Security Council), Ethiopia (as Chair of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development) and Nigeria (as Chair of the Economic Community of West African States).

^b South Africa was represented by its President. Eight Council members were represented at the ministerial level: Azerbaijan (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Colombia (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Guatemala (Minister of Foreign Affairs), France (Minister of State attached to the 'Ministre d'Etat', Minister of Foreign and European Affairs), Germany (Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office), Portugal (Secretary of State for Foreign and Cooperation Affairs at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs), Togo (Minister and Special Adviser to the President) and China (Special Representative of the Chinese Government for African Affairs).

^c Armenia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba (on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)), Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia (on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union), Fiji, Georgia, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan (on behalf of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and on behalf of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Peru (on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (on behalf of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), and Viet Nam (on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)).

^d Argentina was represented by its President.