Security Council

Provisional

Fifty-ninth year

5007th meeting

Tuesday, 20 July 2004, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Geoana, then Mr. Nastase	....	(Romania)
Members:	Algeria	....	Mr. Bencherif
	Angola	....	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Benin	....	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	....	Mr. Garcia Moritán
	Chile	....	Mr. Acuña
	China	....	Mr. Cheng Jingye
	France	....	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	....	Mr. Much
	Pakistan	....	Mr. Chaudhry
	Philippines	....	Mr. Mercado
	Russian Federation	....	Mr. Knyazev
	Spain	....	Mr. De Palacio España
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	.....	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United States of America	....	Mr. Holliday

Agenda

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in
stabilization processes

Letter dated 8 July 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Romania to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2004/546)

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delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting resumed at 3.15 p.m.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Aminu Bashir Wali, representative of the Chair of the African Union.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite His Excellency Mr. Aminu Bashir Wali, representative of the Chair of the African Union, to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

I now invite His Excellency Mr. Mokhtar Lamani, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to take the floor.

Mr. Lamani: At the outset, permit me, Mr. President, to express our gratitude to you for inviting the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to participate in this important debate on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in stabilization processes. I wish to convey to the Council the warmest felicitations of the Secretary-General of the OIC, who could not personally attend this important debate owing to the short notice and to his other, prearranged engagements.

The OIC, with its 57 member States and three observer States spread across all the geographical regions of the world, has been engaged in a cooperative and collaborative relationship with the United Nations, reinforcing our common efforts in the pursuit of peace, security and development worldwide. In the spheres of conflict resolution and peace-building, the Charter of the OIC complements the Charter of the United Nations and calls for the settlement of disputes that might arise among member States by peaceful means such as negotiation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration.

The issue of cooperation between our two organizations — part of the theme of the Council's current debate — is viewed with seriousness by our respective governing organs. In that connection, I am pleased to recall successive General Assembly resolutions, including most recently resolution 57/42, adopted by the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, which welcomed with appreciation the continuing cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC in the fields of peacemaking, preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping. I recall with equal pleasure the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (A/57/405), which acknowledged with appreciation the cooperation of the OIC, inter alia, in the areas of conflict prevention and peacemaking.

These remarks go beyond semantics and pleasantries, since many of the issues on the Security Council's agenda are also of major concern to the OIC — notably issues related to, inter alia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the conflicts in Sierra Leone, Somalia and other African countries, the Middle East, Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir.

In the recently concluded thirty-first session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Istanbul last month, the OIC reaffirmed its support for the Middle East peace process, including the implementation of the road map — which indeed complements Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) as well as General Assembly resolution 194 (III) — aimed at ending the occupation of Arab territories. That, we believe, would be an effective prerequisite for the achievement of peace and stability in the Middle East.

The OIC has welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 1546 (2004), which sets forth the framework for Iraq's transition to a sovereign democratic State.

The OIC strongly supports all efforts aimed at restoring peace, national reconciliation and stability in Afghanistan, as well as at promoting the socio-economic rehabilitation and reconstruction of that country. Thus, as a complementary measure, it has established an Afghan people's assistance fund aimed at supporting international reconstruction efforts in that country.

The OIC has reaffirmed its support for initiatives aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, in accordance with Security Council resolutions and with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. In that connection, it has welcomed the opening of the composite dialogue process between Pakistan and India, in which the question of Jammu and Kashmir and issues of peace and security, as well as other issues of concern to the two countries, are expected to be addressed.

The OIC has commended the endorsement of a peaceful United Nations settlement plan by the Turkish Cypriot people and has supported the good offices mission of the Secretary-General.

I believe that it would be fair to say that neither the United Nations nor the OIC is oblivious to the growing trend towards Islamophobia that is being felt in several parts of the world. Unless the resultant injustice is effectively redressed, conflict and consequent instability will continue to trouble large parts of the planet. It is also evident that today, in addressing important regional conflicts, global threats of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, greater cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations, especially the Security Council, is essential. This would need to be complemented by close cooperation with other regional organizations so as to thwart the pernicious objectives of extremists and ideologues, who are active in seeking to promote a clash of civilizations and cultures instead of fostering understanding, tolerance and cooperation among nations, which is our collective desire, and a crucial need of the time.

In its quest for stability, peace and justice, the OIC has endorsed several recent initiatives, such as the dialogue among civilizations proposed by President Mohammed Khatami of Iran, and the "enlightened moderation" proposed by President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan. It has decided to establish institutional relations with other regional organizations for the purpose of fostering intraregional and interregional cooperation, which we hope will provide a stimulus to similar initiatives by other regional and interregional organizations.

We sincerely believe that these efforts need to be synergized into a mutually reinforcing interplay among the various intergovernmental organizations, with the United Nations leading the way in formulating complementary strategies to bolster the stabilization process in various parts of the world.

The Annual Coordination Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the OIC member States, held every year in New York during the general debate in the General Assembly, the OIC Group of Permanent Representatives in New York and the biennial meetings between the two systems of our organizations, are readily available instruments for dialogue and cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations.

With these and other instruments, we pledge our resolve to continue to work with the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations in steering our world towards the peaceful environment of the global village, which is our common destiny.

(*spoke in French*)

In conclusion, it is certainly clear to us that the United Nations has never been so necessary and that its cooperation with regional systems has never been so useful as it is today. It is up to all of us to come together to meet the challenges posed by war, terrorism, disease, poverty, ignorance and many other crises, because it is in this forum — the United Nations — that the rules of international legitimacy are being developed.

The President: We appreciate the institutionalized framework of consultations between the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations. I would also like to welcome the excellent work done in the context of the dialogue among civilizations and "enlightened moderation". I also welcome the fact that the ministerial meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the European Union is scheduled to take place in Istanbul in the next few weeks.

Mr. Holliday (United States of America): I would like to welcome you, Mr. President, to the Security Council. We would like to thank you and the Romanian presidency for having organized this timely and relevant debate. It is an honour to have you preside over this meeting. We hope to build on last year's meeting on a similar subject.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations will continue to be a timely topic because of the ongoing surge in instability in a number of regions. Regional organizations have a key role to play in responding to conflict within their regions. Often, action by regional arrangements is the most timely and appropriate response. In some cases, a collaborative effort between regional organizations and the United Nations has proved to be quite effective. The United Nations has an important role to play in supporting such regional efforts, in particular efforts to reach political settlements. In some cases — several in the past year — we have supported direct United Nations action to facilitate the implementation of such political settlements.

In Afghanistan, NATO is working closely with the United Nations and other organizations to prepare for elections, train police and counter the debilitating trade in narcotics. In the western hemisphere, the international community's response in Haiti is another example of the prospects for enhanced coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations. The Organization of American States (OAS) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) are important partners for the United Nations, and their participation will be essential to the success of international efforts in Haiti. Indeed, Security Council resolution 1542 (2004), which authorized the deployment of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, directed that the United Nations cooperate and coordinate closely with the OAS and CARICOM. We hope that the OAS will continue to play a key role in supporting Haiti's efforts to hold new elections.

In 2000, the Security Council adopted resolution 1318 (2000), which called for strengthening cooperation and communication between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations with respect to peacekeeping operations, particularly in Africa. It emphasized the importance of continued cooperation and effective coordination between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity and African subregional organizations in addressing conflict in Africa. In the same year a special panel on peacekeeping endorsed the recommendations of the Secretary-General in the millennium report (A/54/2000) that all who engaged in peacekeeping or conflict prevention — for example, the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, Governments and members of civil society — should address peacekeeping challenges in an integrated fashion.

In order to provide rapid response capability in times of crisis, European nations and Canada, in addition to several others, formed the Standby High Readiness Brigade, a trained and ready headquarters unit that could develop a plan and move into a failed State or post-conflict situation so as to stabilize it in advance of the United Nations. It has performed successfully in several operations, including the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, and has broadened its membership.

Over the course of a number of years, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has become an important player. I pay tribute to my colleague from Ghana, who has played such an important role in that respect. It has performed well in both Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire during the past year. ECOWAS was able to activate its troops in the ECOWAS mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) long before the United Nations would have been ready. It managed the transition to blue hats comfortably, and generally served peacekeeping needs commendably. Thousands of lives may have been saved in Liberia by the early arrival of ECOMIL.

We must, however, recognize that there are certain limits to the peacekeeping capacity of ECOWAS because of the lack of funds. If the international community wishes to rely on ECOWAS on a continuing basis, it will have to address those needs.

President Bush is committed to the idea of supporting the African Union and other regional organizations in their efforts to bring peace and stability to the African continent. Our African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance initiative has provided training to a number of African nations. The President's former Special Envoy for Peace to the Sudan, Ambassador Danforth, shares this commitment and has a personal concern for the Sudan, which is, of course, a major focus for the regional efforts in Africa. This specifically relates to the role the African Union can play with regard to monitoring and, of course, the deployment of protection for those monitors.

As it was set forth in the Group of Eight action plan for peace support operations in Africa, conflict management is a key activity for the African Union (AU), and we intend to continue to support its efforts, as we have done in Burundi and are now doing in Darfur. Darfur is an important test for the international community. Council members and regional organizations, especially the AU, must all work together as we seek to help the people of Sudan. We will all be judged not only by our expressions of political will, which have been positive and proactive, but also by our ability to use our talents and resources to implement activities on the ground. The AU Peace and Security Council is playing a catalytic role in that effort. We hope that it will continue to press the parties, especially the Government of Sudan, to adhere to the ceasefire, maintain the pace in establishing the ceasefire commission and press forward with political talks in Addis Ababa. The United States Government is working closely with the AU and other donors and has

begun committing several million dollars to support the AU's work in setting up the ceasefire commission in Darfur.

I would like to express just a few caveats related to regional arrangements, which I would urge be considered prior to utilizing regional arrangements in which a country is providing peacekeepers to its neighbours. On the one hand, a troop-contributing country may share language, cultural elements and a common understanding with the host country. However, it may also have its own agenda independent of the peacekeeping agenda. We need to watch carefully for that possibility, given the goal of long-term regional peace and stability.

There are two other issues the Security Council has highlighted in recent years that I would like briefly to touch on. The first is the role of women, not just as victims of warfare but also as players and participants in the peacekeeping process, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

The second issue is the nexus between HIV/AIDS and peacekeeping, addressed in Security Council resolution 1308 (2000). In November 2003, the Council was briefed by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on prevention and education measures that missions should be taking to protect both peacekeepers and host populations from contracting HIV (see S/PV.4859). I would urge regional organizations to consider appropriate policies in those areas in preparation for participation in stabilization or peacekeeping missions.

Let me conclude by thanking you again, Mr. President, and the Mission of Romania for convening this useful forum. There have been a lot of good ideas advanced here today. We look forward to studying them further. We would like to highlight again the importance of critical thinking on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

The President: Let me assure all participants that Romania will continue to have a very active and educative role in this respect. I am convinced that our debate is leading in that direction. As well, I add my voice to some of the issues expressed here. Sudan and Darfur is a case in point, and the next few days will be decisive in that regard. I also welcome the remarks of the representative of the United States about the role of women and the relation between HIV/AIDS and

peacekeeping, as well as his remarks about failed States.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): At the outset, I would like to commend you personally, Sir, and the Romanian presidency for convening this timely and very important meeting on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in stabilization processes. I welcome with appreciation the opening remarks of the Secretary-General this morning. I also express appreciation for the presence of the high-level dignitaries who have graced our meeting and the ranking officials present in representation of various regional and subregional organizations.

As mentioned in the excellent concept paper (S/2004/546, annex) prepared to guide the work of this meeting, regional organizations are increasingly recognized as instrumental mechanisms for collective security and play a central role in the prevention of conflicts and the management of stabilization processes. While conferring upon the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the United Nations Charter, as is appropriate, provides a role for regional arrangements and agencies in the maintenance of peace and security.

My delegation would like to focus on the African continent, where regional and subregional organizations have established peace and security mechanisms to deal with conflicts. The African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Inter-governmental Authority of Development, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community and the Southern African Development Community are playing an ever-increasing role in the promotion of peace and the stabilization processes in the continent.

To complement those efforts and enhance their role, fruitful cooperation is actively being developed between the Security Council and African organizations. In September 1997, the Security Council met at the level of Foreign Ministers to consider the need for concerted international action to promote peace and security in Africa (see S/PV.3819). The report of the Secretary-General of April 1998 to the Security Council and the General Assembly (S/1998/318) contains relevant recommendations on support for regional and subregional peace initiatives,

reconstruction and long-term national reconciliation, and on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

The lessons we can draw from that report confirm that cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in stabilization processes, aside from enhancing the efficiency of the Security Council, may contribute to a comprehensive approach that necessarily integrates the economic and social perspectives. At the political level, such cooperation has led to a process of broader consultations and to a better understanding of the problems faced by the countries and regions in conflict. It has significantly contributed to the strengthening of institutional capacities and early warning capabilities in conflict prevention. It has increased the coordination and the better deployment of peacekeeping operations. It has contributed to greater equity in mobilizing and allocating the financial resources needed to meet internationally agreed development targets. Last but not least, cooperation between the United Nations system and regional organizations has proven to have enormous potential for contributing to the consolidation of peace and post-conflict long-term stabilization. In that connection, useful lessons can be learned from the cases of Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Burundi, where ECOWAS and African Union forces were replaced in a timely fashion by United Nations peacekeeping operations, including through the integration of their contingents.

The decision to create the African Union and, more recently, its Peace and Security Council reflect the Union's commitment to build a better future for the African peoples. The clear stands taken in addressing fundamental issues such as political and social stability in Africa, governance, democracy, the partnership for development, the fight against terrorism, mercenaries, the proliferation of and trafficking in small arms, and the illegal exploitation of natural resources are a further demonstration of such a commitment.

There is a basic awareness of the fact that Africans and African regional and subregional organizations cannot attain much by themselves, and that international cooperation — in particular with the United Nations — is a key factor in the attainment of those objectives. The efforts under way to deal with the crisis in the Sudanese region of Darfur is not only a clear demonstration of the commitment of the newly established Peace and Security Council of the African Union, but also a model of cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and other important players, such as the European Union. They show how efficient regional organizations can be if they are duly supported in a timely manner by the international community. In that context, we welcome the support and particular attention that has recently been given to the training of African forces in the framework of capacity building with a view to establishing an African standby force.

We believe in the need to ensure that the international community's collective efforts to build a more peaceful world are complementary and mutually reinforcing. Taking into account comparative advantages, we would like to underscore the importance of cooperation among regional organizations. Cooperation among the European Union, the African Union and the Southern Africa Development Community in support of national initiatives aimed at enhancing peace-building capacities at the subregional and national levels is a good illustration of cooperation among regional organizations. We commend the cooperation and collaboration among regional and subregional organizations, including through the exchange of information, the sharing of experiences and a greater acknowledgement of best practices in support of national endeavours aimed at promoting self-reliance.

In conclusion, we welcome the ongoing practice of holding regular meetings between the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations. We commend the consensus reached on the modalities of cooperation for conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building. It is our hope that the outcome of those meetings will contribute to strengthening mutual understanding and cooperation.

The President: I think we should acknowledge the increasing role played by the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and other regional and subregional bodies in addressing various conflict situations in Africa. Long-term stabilization is an important issue that merits greater attention and interaction among African and other regional organizations that can contribute their share. The European Union is a good example in that regard.

I now call on Nana Effah-Apenteng, representative of the Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States.

Nana Effah-Apenteng: At the outset, allow me to convey to you, Mr. President, my delegation's pleasure at the convening of this timely thematic debate of the Security Council on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in stabilization processes. We also thank you for gracing the occasion with your presence. It is heartening to note Romania's remarkable presidency of the Council so far, and we wish you the best for the remainder of the month.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) would like to place on record its gratitude for having been invited to participate in this debate. I must, however, apologize for the inability of Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, to participate in this meeting, due to other pressing engagements.

The Security Council will recall, that, beginning with the conflicts of the 1990s in Liberia and Sierra Leone, ECOWAS has both witnessed and participated in the transition from the traditional concept of peacekeeping — involving the interposition of troops between consenting belligerent parties — to the contemporary, evolving concepts of peace operations that are informed by such concepts as peace-enforcement, peace-building and so on. The latter is a feature that has characterized the post-cold-war era, where most of the conflicts involve Governments fighting anti-government armed factions, or factions fighting their way to power or the complete normative collapse of States, as we saw in Liberia. Those low-intensity conflicts are often very brutal and destructive. They create terrible humanitarian catastrophes, as in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The potential for a similar eventuality exists today in Côte d'Ivoire. External interventions to stop such violence quickly have therefore become increasingly imperative. The reality is that such interventions cannot be tidily done, and are sometimes done against the expressed wishes of one party to the conflict or the other.

It will be recalled, for example, that the human carnage that accompanied the outbreak of the Liberian conflict in 1989 led to what was rightly foreseen as having potential implications beyond the borders of that country. That compelled ECOWAS to establish the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in order to intervene militarily. Before ECOMOG was deployed, on 7 August 1990, 225,000 Liberians had flooded into Guinea, 150,000 into Côte d'Ivoire and 69,000 into Sierra Leone. About 5,000 people had been killed, and about 3,000 Nigerian, Ghanaian and Sierra Leonean citizens were being held hostage by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia rebel movement. It may be of interest to note that the legal instrument available to ECOWAS at the time were the Protocol on Non-Aggression and the Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defence Matters, which were both strongly anchored in the prevailing view that there should be no interference in the internal affairs of member States.

I have begun with that recollection because, in ECOWAS's experience at the time, our expectations that the United Nations would quickly intervene in Liberia, and subsequently in Sierra Leone, to help halt the escalation of those conflicts at their outset, in the spirit of Chapters VI and VII of the Charter of the United Nations, were not met quickly enough. ECOWAS consequently undertook to commit itself to resolve those conflicts without the requisite experience and structures — with the attendant mixed results.

As a result of those experiences, we have wholeheartedly identified with efforts to focus on an enhanced strategic partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations to coordinate efforts aimed at ensuring stability. We welcome all forms of assistance to develop the capabilities of ECOWAS. To that end, we have, over the years, shown that regional organizations such as ours should quite appropriately be the primary focus in the management of conflict in their respective regions, but not without the support and active collaboration of the international community. I will therefore briefly outline the concrete framework of both ongoing and envisaged efforts to promote cooperation between the United Nations and our regional organization, within which ECOWAS deems cooperation with United Nations in the area of peace and security capable of yielding the best results.

It is important to point out that ECOWAS, as its name denotes, was established to promote cooperation and development in all fields of economic activity for the purpose of raising the standard of living of its peoples, of increasing and maintaining economic stability, of fostering closer relations among its members and of contributing to the progress and development of the African continent. Those purposes, however, cannot be achieved in an unstable environment. Cognizant of that fact, ECOWAS is therefore desirous of working with the United Nations in the spirit of Chapter VIII of the Charter to create a

political, economic and social environment in its member States that is stable and secure. The partnership between the United Nations and ECOWAS would be most enhanced if the United Nations were to provide the support required to enable ECOWAS to build the structures associated with the implementation of the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Regional Security.

I shall now turn to the subject of a framework for cooperation. Several initiatives have been undertaken in the past, or are in the process of implementation, to establish an appropriate framework for cooperation between the United Nations and ECOWAS in areas such as information sharing, capacity-building and fundraising. The overall objectives are to promote conflict prevention, conflict management and resolution and peace building.

In order to actualize the stated objectives, ECOWAS has signed various memorandums of understanding with United Nations bodies, such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the West African Network for Peacebuilding. A draft memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) is expected to be signed soon. The relationship with UNOWA is particularly important because this memorandum is designed to strengthen cooperation between the parties with a view to contributing to improving the capacity of ECOWAS in conflict prevention; enhancing the preparedness and capacity to respond to emerging crises; encouraging a regional approach to conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict stabilization in cooperation with other partners in the subregion, including women's organizations; better addressing cross-border issues, in particular the plight of child soldiers and the use of mercenaries, human trafficking and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; involving civil society participation in conflict prevention, resolution, peace-building and post-conflict recovery; and mobilizing the international community's support for peace and security in West Africa.

ECOWAS is focused on the promotion of its Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance as a key aspect of its conflict prevention policy, because the absence of those two components has served as a major contributory factor in the various conflicts in the region. Since ECOWAS started implementing the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, the various organs of the Mechanism have enabled it to act in a more coordinated manner to prevent or mitigate the effects of emerging conflict. Examples of such action include ECOWAS's recent response to the situations in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia. There is a lot of scope for coordination with the United Nations to strengthen the activities of ECOWAS's mediation and conflict resolution organs.

Another important pillar of ECOWAS conflict prevention efforts is its early warning system. The organization's priority is to broaden its sources of information on conflict indicators. It is desirous to share information with OCHA and relevant non-governmental organizations with established information networks. It would be most helpful for a formal link to be established between the ECOWAS early warning system and that of the United Nations Headquarters and it agencies. Areas of collaboration could include, first, a regular and structured exchange of information and documentation on respective policies and activities, subject to the rules of confidentiality existing in the respective organizations; secondly, a regular exchange of visits and the organization of working sessions between the heads and senior management of ECOWAS and United Nations agencies; thirdly, the designation by both organizations of dedicated focal points that would be responsible for monitoring and facilitating the implementation of cooperation arrangements between the two organizations; fourthly, the organization of regular follow-up working visits by focal points; and fifthly, attendance at meetings and seminars organized by each organization, by invitation and as appropriate.

The Council of Elders, which is composed of eminent personalities in the region, is another component of ECOWAS's preventive diplomacy mechanism. So far, it has been engaged in election monitoring and special missions. ECOWAS believes that the relevance of that body could be enhanced and its preventive diplomacy efforts given added impetus if a formal process were established between the United Nations and ECOWAS to use their expertise.

ECOWAS's policy on conflict resolution and management is geared towards creating rapid response and sustained peacekeeping capabilities. One of the organs established in the ECOWAS Mechanism to

provide such capability is ECOMOG. It is a structure composed of several standby multi-purpose modules — civilian and military — in their countries of origin and ready for immediate deployment. ECOWAS's peacekeeping vision to

> "define, build, organize and maintain a standby regional military capability in peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance to a level of self-sustenance in the area of troops and logistics support to enable it to respond to internal or external regional crises threatening peace and security, including terrorists and/or environmental threats"

was approved with the setting up of a task force by the organization's Defence and Security Commission on 18 June, 2004.

The approved establishment of the envisaged peacekeeping force, based on the creation of stand-by units, would consist of two models: a task force of 1,500 soldiers for rapid stabilization or pre-emptive deployment, to be known as the ECOWAS task force, and a brigade of 5,000 soldiers for a more sustained operation. Such a task force, as in Côte d'Ivoire or the vanguard force in Liberia, would set the stage for subsequent United Nations intervention. In this connection, we seek further cooperation with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) because of the latter's enormous experience and better developed structures to conduct a thorough needs assessment of member States' armed forces to prepare them to play their envisaged roles. ECOWAS would also welcome the opportunity to work with DPKO and the Standby Force High Readiness Brigade to develop the structures of the force headquarters and logistics bases. Most importantly, the doctrinal documents used by DPKO would greatly assist the recently established ECOWAS Mission Planning and Management Cell in planning operations, developing the appropriate formats for standard operating procedures and other operational documents.

The establishment of the ECOWAS Mechanism has made military interventions much easier in recent years than they were in the previous decade. The mechanism was put to the test in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. In both cases, the collaboration of the United Nations, in terms of assistance, was very valuable. Both interventions were classical hybrid operations in which ECOWAS stabilized the environment as a prelude to United Nations deployment. It is therefore important to note the existing paradox that, while ECOWAS deployments are characterized by a lack of adequate administrative and logistics infrastructure, the United Nations peace operations have on occasion been described as too expensive. It stands to reason that the United Nations and ECOWAS need to find a middle ground and work out modalities to enhance the full benefits to be derived from ECOWAS capabilities by maximizing advantages in such areas as those of regional expertise, rapid response potential, over-the-horizon capabilities and a coherent headquarters.

In the area of peace-building, ECOWAS finds itself seriously handicapped in executing peace-building programmes. Protocols and memorandums have been put into place to provide the structures necessary to address such issues as the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, election monitoring, the promotion of trade and economic activities. We are positive that the implementation of these memorandums would contribute to creating the required synergy between both organizations. ECOWAS and the United Nations need to work together on disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration in trouble spots, such as Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. Other major challenges to be addressed are security sector reforms in most member States and consolidating gains made in the process of consolidating good governance in countries with weak political systems.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that there is a lot of scope for improving the interface between the United Nations and ECOWAS. Mindful of existing potentials for fruitful collaborative work between our two organizations, ECOWAS looks forward to enhancing relations with the United Nations in providing the requisite leadership to promote world peace, security and development.

The President: The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has indeed been actively involved for several years in addressing many conflicts in West Africa, both internal and regional. We hope that ECOWAS will continue to cooperate in the same determined way with different United Nations peacekeeping and stabilization missions deployed in that region.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (spoke in French): At the outset, I should like to express my delegation's

pleasure at seeing you, Sir, preside today over the work of our Council.

We believe that the theme selected by the Romanian delegation for this debate is both useful and relevant. Indeed, it allows us to pursue our thinking following Mexico's initiative last year regarding the need for enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Given the growing needs in the area of peacekeeping, regional organizations have a pivotal role to play in backing the actions of the United Nations and in supporting it.

What is our situation now? I think that we can say that great progress has been made in the past few years, and even in the past few months, by regional organizations in the areas of conflict prevention, the diplomatic management of crises, and the maintenance of peace — be it prior to United Nations action, in taking over from it or in supplementing its work.

We are obliged to note, however, that not all of the regional organizations can progress at the same pace; that, naturally, they act according to their own capacity; and also that a particular effort is being made by some of those organizations. I do not wish to refer to all of them, but I will mention a few of the organizations that are making that particular effort.

The representative of the European Union took the floor earlier, and I am pleased, as we take stock once again, to be able to say that the European Union is now firmly committed to strengthening its capacity to support the crisis-management activities of the United Nations — be it in Kosovo, in Bosnia or in Macedonia.

In the context of the continuation of Operation Artemis in Bunia, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the European Union is also now acting under the European Union-United Nations declaration of 24 September last in the area of crisis management.

Finally, we should not forget that the European Union is also acting to strengthen the capacity of regional and subregional organizations in Africa through its peace support facility, which makes it possible to finance African peacekeeping operations such as the African Union observation mission, which is currently deployed in Darfur.

I would like also to pay particular tribute to the African Union, which has made major progress in the establishment of an African standby force and an early-warning system, which will contribute to strengthening its capacity for conflict prevention and resolution. Nor can we forget the commitment of the African Union in Burundi, which was decisive for the peace process n that country. The African force made it possible to bolster the ceasefire at a time when the United Nations was not yet ready to deploy a peacekeeping operation.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) — whose representative we have just heard — also deserves our praise for the pivotal role it played, with very limited resources, in conflicts such as the ones in Liberia and in Côte d'Ivoire and in the settlement of the most recent crisis in Guinea-Bissau.

The Organization of American States is firmly committed to Haiti, and we welcome that. Reference should also be made to the efforts of the Inter-Government Authority on Development in Somalia and those of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community in the Central African Republic. We would recall also the contribution made by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) recalled here earlier, which last year was referred to at length during the debate held under the Bulgarian presidency.

In that context, which is now more favourable, the question arises as to what more can be done today to improve existing cooperation between the United Nations and some of the regional organizations. I think that we are all asking what our approach should be. I think we need to be both far-reaching here and pragmatic — far-reaching because, as we have noted for several months now, the United Nations cannot do everything on its own. Factors for instability are numerous, and the need for peacekeeping is continuing to increase. Moreover, it is certainly not desirable for the United Nations always to be called on to come to the rescue, and we will certainly heed any proposals that might be made by the high-level panel in that field.

We therefore need in particular to seek to enhance mechanisms for crisis prevention. The regional organizations can very often — more easily than the United Nations because of their proximity, something that has been said several times today — bring into play their early-warning mechanisms and therefore provide the United Nations with valuable information, which must be reciprocated.

Progress has also been made in our relations with the African Union, but we can clearly do more to develop the principles laid down in Article 54 of the

Charter and to strengthen concerted action between the Security Council and regional organizations.

That is the objective. In the short term, it must be given specific application. So, for example, why not work on the handover of a regional operation to a United Nations operation? Such a transition must be properly prepared and give rise to an in-depth exchange with the Security Council. I must say that was not the case recently. We could have been more forthcoming and could have received the African Union here in New York during the establishment of the United Nations Operation in Burundi. We must see to it that there is greater consultation in future. We also need to improve our concerted action with the new mechanisms acquired by the African Union.

We can also promote the role of regional organizations in post-conflict situations, following the withdrawal of a United Nations peacekeeping operation, by involving the regional organizations at an earlier stage in the strategy for addressing the crisis.

It seems to us that, in promoting such coordination, our Council must remain, as I said earlier, far-reaching, but also realistic. Given the broad variety of situations and the fact that regional organizations are not all committed at the same level, I am not sure that we could a priori set up a framework for procedures for the division of labour, which might turn out to be more of a constraint than a benefit.

Excessive formalism might get us involved in an approach that at this stage might be artificial. It would be better to create a realistic dynamic process between the United Nations and regional organizations. It is on a case-by-case basis, using a pragmatic approach, that we will manage to make progress.

The presidential statement you will soon be making, Sir, encourages us to move in the right direction. France fully supports those commitments.

The President (*spoke in French*): We appreciate France's support for the subject proposed by Romania, as well as the individual contribution made in support of projects aimed at developing regional and subregional capacities for post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction, in particular regarding the African continent. I would like to assure the representative of France that we intend to submit the results, which could be useful in terms of achieving what he

mentioned earlier — a Security Council that is not only realistic but also effective.

I invite the representative of the Chair of the African Union, Mr. Aminu Bashir Wali, to take the floor.

Mr. Wali: May I take this opportunity, Sir, to express my delegation's appreciation to you for having convened this debate. I wish also to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to wish you a successful tenure.

The African Union is also pleased to have been invited to this debate, and I apologize for the inability of the Chairman of the African Union, President Olesegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, to be here personally due to prior engagements.

The delegation of Nigeria is delighted to see you, Sir, preside over the affairs of the Security Council. We note that this debate is taking place at a time when the Council has just concluded its consideration of the report of its mission to West Africa, which, inter alia, also focuses on the proactive role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the quest for peace and stability in the subregion.

We thank you, Sir, for having organized this meeting and are confident that this and other efforts of the Security Council will lead to improved coordination between the Council and regional organizations in the management of conflict as well as enhance the appreciation of Member States for the Council — the organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with Chapter V, Article 24, of the United Nations Charter. I wish to recall also that that Article enjoins the Organization to take effective and collective measures aimed at the prevention and removal of threats to peace and at the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace. Article 52 recognizes the relevance and the role of regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is noteworthy that that responsibility was reaffirmed by General Assembly resolution 55/128.

The global village in which we live today demands that the spirit of community and shared vision should guide the actions of everyone on all issues of concern to the international community. My country has therefore followed with satisfaction the various

initiatives of the Security Council aimed at winning the support of regional leaders and organizations for the common goal of conflict prevention and resolution.

Permit me, in that regard, to refer to the Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. It reflects the Security Council's determination to continue its engagement with Africa by strengthening its cooperation with the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations in the area of international peace and security. The appointment of special envoys by the Chair of the African Union in areas where the Council is operational is another important step in cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the stabilization process. As a result of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group, the Security Council now pays regular attention to challenges to stability in Africa.

As has been amply demonstrated, solutions to these problems require comprehensive approaches. They also require intimate knowledge of the terrain, the politics and the complex interplay of forces in that region. That is why regional organizations can play a useful role.

The development of regional strategies that involve regional actors in the resolution of conflicts has been the primary approach of countries in our region. The Constitutive Act of the African Union upholds Article 33 of the United Nations Charter, which enjoins the pacific settlement of disputes through negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and resort to regional agencies or arrangements. The Act has a built-in mechanism for conflict resolution through the Union's Peace and Security Council. The responsibility for conflict resolution is also undertaken by the heads of State or Government of the African Union and, at the subregional level, by the authority of heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community.

The role of regional and subregional organizations in complementing the work of the United Nations on issues of peace and security is therefore self-evident. Within that context, the African Union, through its central organ, the Peace and Security Council, has been active in mediating conflicts. Today, no conflict situation is outside its range of consideration. In all these crisis situations, the African Union has either taken direct action or worked closely with subregional organizations and/or the United Nations. It is an indication of its involvement in the peace and security issues of the continent that the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union entered into force on 26 December 2003. Measures are now being taken to operationalize all aspects of the Protocol. These include the Panel of the Wise, the continental Early Warning System, the African Standby Force and the Union's Military Staff Committee.

In West Africa, considerable progress has been made in retooling the machinery for conflict resolution. The Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, adopted by ECOWAS in 1999, provided for the creation of several organs, including the Mediation and Security Council, the Council of Elders and a department in the secretariat charged with responsibility for peace and security issues.

In all those initiatives, African leaders have sought the cooperation and input of the Security Council, as the primary organ of the United Nations charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. For example, ECOWAS took steps to inform the Security Council of intended measures and canvassed for support and cooperation. In Côte d'Ivoire, a delegation of ECOWAS Ministers for Foreign Affairs made a strong representation to the Security Council and persuaded it to establish a United Nations peacekeeping operation in that country. Earlier, it had been a contingent of ECOWAS forces and some French troops that had managed to contain the volatile political situation. The support of the Security Council, through its resolution 1479 (2003), was instrumental to the United Nations presence in the country.

It is equally noteworthy that all the decisions of those regional and subregional organizations have been promptly conveyed to the Security Council for its information as input into its decision-making process. That has been done in full appreciation of the Council's primary role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Our experience in Liberia and in other conflicts has clearly shown the important contributions that subregional organizations such as ECOWAS have made and can make towards peace and stability when dealing

with complex situations. It will be recalled, for example, that the deployment of the first contingents of West African peacekeeping troops in Monrovia, on 5 August 2003, promptly stabilized the situation and facilitated the eventual deployment of United Nations humanitarian efforts.

Obviously, there is much more that can be done to reinforce such cooperation. In our estimation, the political will demonstrated by African leaders in the search for solutions to conflicts, as well as the establishment of the basis for stability and development, deserves to be backed by commensurate resources. There is a need to mobilize the support of the international community for post-conflict peace-building and humanitarian challenges. Similarly, assistance in the training of troops and the standardization of equipment for peacekeeping duties will continue to be needed. Above all, the United Nations should cooperate with regional organizations to address the root causes of conflicts and the factors that exacerbate them. Most of them are cross-border problems. Their solution, therefore, requires not only regional or subregional approaches, but the active support and cooperation of the international community.

Finally, we note with satisfaction that the United Nations Office for West Africa, as part of its efforts aimed at enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, is forging a close working relationship with the Economic Community of West African States. We welcome the cooperation with the African Union which is being forged through the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, especially in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In that connection, we note with appreciation the Secretary-General's decision to establish an advisory panel on international support for NEPAD. That cooperation should be enhanced through the deployment of additional resources. We believe that the international community stands to gain from such collaboration in addressing the challenges of conflict and instability in Africa.

The President: I acknowledge the importance of regional ownership and engagement in addressing challenges to international peace and security. This requires comprehensive approaches, transparency and a great deal of cooperation with the United Nations and with other regional organizations in a position to provide expertise and support. Confidence can be developed through genuine partnerships between the United Nations and interested regional organizations, as well as among regional organizations themselves.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): It is a particular pleasure, Mr. President, to take part in a debate presided over by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Romania. Your wisdom in choosing the subject has been demonstrated by the quality of the debate we have had so far.

Many contributions today have demonstrated why it is that the partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations is really so important, and why it has the potential to be so much more productive. It is because regional organizations can bring a great deal to the partnership. They can provide an accepted framework in which to take forward stabilization. They have greater knowledge of the situation on the ground. In many cases they are developing appropriate, regionally accepted norms and standards, and they match them with the right mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement. It is so much better if regionally owned mechanisms enhance accountability and help create — on the ground — better government.

Regional organizations can be a means of providing an incentive in the stabilization process. In the case of the Balkans, the prospect of European Union (EU) membership has been a great motivation. Regional structures can provide ways of pooling resources to maximize the impact on stabilization: regional training centres for policing and peacekeeping, for example. Such structures can help tackle cross-border aspects of stabilization, such as refugee flows and the monitoring of sanctions. Nowhere is that more apparent that in West Africa, where one cannot tackle individual countries absent the regional dimension.

Regional organizations have unique and complementary capacities to offer in support of United Nations peacekeeping, including, in some cases, established and evolved rapid response capabilities. Operation Artemis demonstrated that.

But the regional approach can also help to sustain political commitment to the stabilization effort. Regional organizations have a key role to play in sustainable economic development, which must — as a number of colleagues have underlined — underpin the stabilization effort. The Bretton Woods institutions and

regional organizations must be at the heart of a coordinated response. We have heard from the Economic Community of West African States very clearly about what the economic dimension might mean in West Africa. All of those are strong arguments for supporting regional efforts where they are happening indigenously, on the ground.

How we make the partnership work is the key question. How do we convert it from theory to practice? There is no one model for partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations. It does not make sense to create heavy, formal mechanisms at Headquarters level, and structures need to be developed case by case and as flexibly as possible.

But there is no question that stronger coordination is required, especially on the ground, and especially between military and civilian components. I think a key lesson from the past 15 years of stabilization, perhaps most recently in Kosovo, is the need to bring all the different pillars together coherently. Extrapolating from that, there is a need in peace-building for the United Nations family, as a whole, to be coherent — and to be coherent with regional players and with all the other actors in a particular area, especially non-governmental organizations and civil society.

Civilian command and control structures need attention. There are ways in which that can be done. But we should also acknowledge that peace-building is much more complex than any form of conflict resolution; it needs a range of interventions, done coherently — and done coherently by all those who have an interest, including, crucially, regional organizations. That should be done transparently so that the decision-making processes between the United Nations and the regional organization are clear to everyone. In our view, that is likely to work best where coordination on the ground is backed up by good communication at Headquarters level.

How can the United Nations make the most of that partnership? I would argue, first, that we have a particular responsibility to help support regional efforts where they are actually emerging on the ground. The political and moral authority of the United Nations should be brought to bear. There is a particular responsibility for supporting regional structures when they lack the capacity to deal with problems alone or

when that extra bit of help can make the difference and convert something into success.

The United Nations should be ready to act as a clearing house for information exchange, review of best practice and the sharing of assets to actually make things happen more easily and more productively. The United Nations can also help ensure consistency of approach in important areas, especially, perhaps, in peacekeeping doctrine. The risk of forces not being interoperable is obvious. The United Nations can play a part in pulling them together.

The United Kingdom is trying to play its part in terms of working with regional organizations. Next year we will preside over both the Group of Eight and the European Union: an opportunity, we hope, to promote a joined-up, outward-looking approach to regional organizations.

I would like to give three specific examples. The first relates to cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations on crisis management, building on the development of the European security defence policy initiative and the Battlegroups Concept. The EU might complement United Nations peacekeeping efforts and bridge the existing capability gaps.

Secondly, with regard to Africa, the Commission for Africa, launched by Tony Blair, will report early next year. I hope that that will contribute hugely to what has been said in this Chamber about the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the importance of the Millennium Development Goals and so forth.

Lastly, with regard to justice and the rule of law, the United Kingdom launched an initiative during its presidency of the Security Council last September. We await the report of the Secretary-General, but that is an area where we must all do much more.

The very subject that you, Mr. President, have chosen for this debate is actually one which is at the heart of the concerns of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. I hope that in the conclusions that it brings forward later this year it will not just acknowledge the role of regional organizations, but give us some very practical ideas as to how that can be carried forward, because creating sustainable security requires concerted commitment from the United Nations, Member States and regional

organizations, all held together, I hope, by political will.

In conclusion, we need to move the debate on. Chapter VIII may be the foundation, but regional organizations are not just subcontractors for maintaining collective security. In the twenty-first century we need to develop a mutually reinforcing partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations. We should aim to avoid duplication of effort, allow work to be undertaken by the organization with comparative advantage, help get regional support and buy-in for proposed solutions and help mobilize the necessary resources and capabilities to support regional initiatives and efforts. That amounts to a full agenda. In the case of areas such as West Africa, we know that that approach is indispensable: it is essential. But if we succeed, the gains for the United Nations, for regional organizations and, above all, for improving the situation in our Member States, are obvious.

The President: Partnerships are, indeed, important in increasing and improving the overall cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in stabilization processes. As the representative of the United Kingdom underlined, we should make those partnerships work. The United Kingdom has proposed several further steps for pursuing cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Hopefully, we can continue this encouraging discussion during Romania's second presidency, in 2005.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Prime Minister of Romania.

I remember a previous occasion, more than a decade ago, when I sat, somewhere in the middle of the left half of this celebrated table, representing Romania as its Foreign Minister, dealing together with other 14 representatives with the first challenges and opportunities of the post-cold war era.

At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General, as well as to the heads of regional organizations for their participation in today's debate. I am grateful for the insightful recommendations and contributions they have made during the consideration of our chosen theme.

Today, we are addressing one of the main issues of modern thinking on international relations. With the support of regional organizations, we can build a more stable foundation for peace and security in all regions of the world. Indeed, synergetic partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations invite optimal use of stabilization resources and capabilities. Recent remarkable illustrations of this have been the European Union peace enforcement mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, NATO's command of the International Security Assistance Force and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's field activities in South-East Europe and the Caucasus. In the wake of the Istanbul Summit, NATO is poised to pursue stabilization efforts in Afghanistan. These examples show the numerous advantages of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and the wide variety of possible inter-institutional architectures for stabilization.

While we search for modes of cooperation, we must keep in mind that the differing characteristics of regional organizations in terms of membership, resource availability and institutional capacity, as well as the uniqueness of each conflict situation, defy the construction of a universal model of cooperation. Nevertheless, as we heard today, some general principles should guide cooperative processes, namely, the primacy of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter and the Security Council's role in preserving international peace and security. If our discussions today are to serve a meaningful purpose, cooperation should be based on the respective comparative advantages of the United Nations and regional organizations. Such comparative advantages should also determine which organization it would be most appropriate to engage in a given conflict situation. For that reason, cooperation must be an ongoing process culminating in the evaluation of lessons learned and best practices based on experience.

We can all agree that today we have gathered a real wealth of valuable proposals. Indeed, channels of communication should promote the coordination of efforts at Headquarters as well as in the field. They should be developed in accordance with the mandates of each relevant organization and in response to the requirements of each conflict situation.

Further engagement with regional organizations can be based on the joint appointment of special representatives, the exchange of liaison officers between mission headquarters and the pursuit of regular dialogue between the United Nations Secretariat and the secretariats of regional

organizations. Those practices could enhance the exchange of information at the operational, strategic and policy levels and ensure coordinated activities based on a common security agenda.

A noteworthy development in the synergy between the United Nations and regional organizations is cross-sector cooperation between Security Council committees and regional organizations. The Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee thus convened three special meetings with international, regional and subregional organizations.

We have at our disposal several means which can be usefully employed to oversee the effectiveness of cooperative arrangements in the different areas of stabilization processes. For example, one can create monitoring mechanisms which, based on the regular and systematic exchange of lessons learned, best practices and joint projects, would themselves contribute to strengthening synergetic efforts.

However, there is greater need for capacity development in regional organizations in order to make full use of their potential assets in stabilization processes. We should not lose sight of the fact that while some States belong to several regional organizations, not all States are members of a regional organization. For that reason, support should be given to fostering the creation of regional organizations in all parts of the world and to the consolidation of emerging regional entities. Such efforts must begin with the development of standards and norms, as well as the creation of the political, military, economic, social and cultural mechanisms needed for their promotion.

There is growing cooperation among regional organizations themselves, as witnessed by partnership agreements for logistical and military support. Such cooperation also focuses on capacity-building; an example is the European Union's arrangement with the African Union for conflict resolution, conflict prevention and peacekeeping capacity development.

A praiseworthy illustration of effective multilateralism at work, aimed at alleviating the suffering of more than 2 million people in need as a result of the Darfur crisis, is the trilateral cooperation that is emerging among the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations in addressing the first humanitarian crisis of such dimensions in the twenty-first century.

As the world body responsible for international peace and security, the Security Council has a clear role to play in assisting in capacity-building and funding for regional organizations. Thus, the Council might consider appealing for more energetic support from the international donor community to regional peace and security initiatives.

Interaction with regional organizations in stabilization processes should favour a multidimensional strategy that focuses on preventing regression into conflict, promoting consolidation of peace and ensuring long-term stability. This requires full and long-term engagement in post-conflict phases, as the consolidation of peace is frequently reversible.

Synergetic efforts should also focus on post-conflict economic development, given the linkage between security and development. The expertise of regional and subregional organizations whose original mandates focused on the promotion of economic integration, such as the Caribbean Community and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), might be of value in ensuring the success of strategies for long-term economic growth and stability.

There is also great need for coordinated activities between regional organizations and United Nations departments and agencies in addressing the complex issues of conflict-torn countries. Guinea-Bissau is a good example of common efforts by ECOWAS, the Security Council and United Nations agencies. In addition, the contributions of civil society organizations are important, as their input can always enhance peace consolidation and reconstruction efforts.

I would like to comment on the stability and democratization of my country and, indeed, of Eastern and Central Europe, which can largely be attributed to regional integration dynamics.

Support from the European Union and NATO, and the emulation of governance patterns in countries members of those organizations, strengthened Romania's advance towards democracy and the rule of law. Not only were we recipients of multilateral expertise in the field of regional peace and stability; we ourselves gradually became promoters of cooperative frameworks and initiatives aimed at enhancing regional cohesiveness in addressing the security climate in the Balkans.

Given its membership in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as well as its chairmanship of the OSCE in 2001 and its current chairmanship of the South-East European Cooperation Process, as well as its bid for membership in the European Union, Romania rightly values regional undertakings and can contribute to the identification within the Security Council of the most adequate means to foster cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in peace and security activities.

Exploring possible synergies between Security Council meetings with regional organizations and the Secretary-General's high-level meetings with heads of regional organizations would enhance the architecture of interaction between the United Nations and regional organizations.

The consideration of today's topic is not meant as a one-time event. It will, however, constitute the central theme of Romania's elected mandate in the Security Council. Romania hopes that the Council will agree to revisit this subject during the landmark year of 2005, and beyond, as a legacy of our membership in this body.

The stakes are very high. Reaching this kind of cooperation between our universal Organization and our regional arrangements will enable us to address every case of tension, to respond to every crisis, to end any conflict and, ultimately, to create a safer world for generations to come. It is also my hope that our dialogue today and the initiatives emanating from this debate will be considered by the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in its consideration of how to ensure better responses to present-day threats to security.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council met on 20 July 2004 to consider 'Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in stabilization processes'. Members recalled that Articles 52 and 53 of the United Nations Charter set forth the contribution of regional organizations to the settlement of disputes, as well as the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations.

"The Security Council recalls its invitation of January 1993 to regional organizations to improve coordination with the United Nations, the Declaration of the General Assembly of December 1994 on the enhancement of cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements or agencies, and its meeting on 'The Security Council and regional organizations: facing the new challenges to international peace and security', held on 11 April 2003 under the Mexican presidency of the Council.

"On 20 July, members expressed their views on the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and acknowledged the important role that can be played by the latter in the prevention, resolution and management of conflicts, including by addressing their root causes.

"The statements emphasized that the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and that effectively addressing the numerous conflict situations confronting the international community would require an increased level of cooperation with regional organizations, where appropriate.

"Member States and heads of regional organizations participating in the meeting stressed their interest in enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. They also considered that regular dialogue on specific issues between the Council and regional organizations would bring significant added value in this respect.

"It was stressed that common and coordinated efforts undertaken by the United Nations and regional organizations in stabilization processes should be based on complementarity and their comparative advantages, making full use of their experience, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the relevant Statutes of the regional organizations.

"The statements reiterated the importance of a coherent approach to stabilization processes through improved cooperation and collaboration, including increased and timely exchange of information between United Nations and regional organizations, in accordance with the provisions of Article 54 of the United Nations Charter.

"The Security Council welcomes the ongoing practice of high-level meetings of the Secretary-General with regional organizations and the consensus reached over modalities of cooperation in conflict prevention and principles of cooperation in peace-building. It invites the Secretary-General to give consideration to the relevant views expressed in this debate in preparation of the next high-level meeting and to keep the Council informed as appropriate.

"The Security Council invites regional organizations to take necessary steps to increase collaboration with the United Nations in order to maximize efficiency in stabilization processes and also encourages enhanced cooperation and coordination among regional and subregional organizations themselves, in particular through

"The Security Council invites all Members of the United Nations to contribute to the strengthening of the capacity of regional and subregional organizations in all parts of the world including through the provision of human, technical and financial assistance.

"The Council invites all Members of the United Nations, and other parts of the United Nations system with relevant experience and expertise, to contribute to this process."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2004/27.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

May I take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to all the participants in this joint exercise aimed at strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.

exchange of information and sharing experience and best practices.