

Mr. Mitra (Bangladesh): We thank the Egyptian presidency of the Security Council for organizing today's open debate. We also thank the distinguished briefers for sharing their insights and recommendations.

Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations envisioned strategic partnerships with regional arrangements as a critical element in the maintenance of international peace and security at a time when such arrangements were largely non-existent or at a nascent stage. Due to a number of factors, the dynamics of regional cooperation have evolved in the last 70 years, but they have done so in a more mature and pragmatic manner in some contexts than in others. It is to the credit of the States members of the African Union (AU) that they have been able to forge a robust regional cooperation mechanism with the aim of managing the challenges they face and embracing the abundant opportunities that have presented themselves. The African Peace and Security Architecture is a sure signpost in that direction.

The United Nations and the African Union have already built a sound platform for engagement and cooperation in the peace and security sphere. The experience garnered in the last 10 years has resulted in the formation of a number of arrangements that have been instrumental in enhancing synergy in the two organizations' peace and security efforts. The recent reviews of United Nations peace operations, the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) have further affirmed this strategic direction, based on evidence and analysis.

There are indeed certain challenges inherent in the existing cooperation arrangements between the United Nations and the African Union. One of the fundamental concerns over burden-sharing in financing remains open for further dialogue. As we see it, in this regard, a flexible yet predictable approach will be crucial in response to specific situations, without our necessarily opting for a straitjacket arrangement that could prove to be self-defeating in certain cases.

Bangladesh has always been a strong proponent of regional cooperation and integration, within our own region and beyond. Within our means, we stand ready to further contribute to United Nations-African Union cooperation in peace and security and development. In this respect, I wish now to draw the Security Council's attention to five possible areas in which we can enhance

our contribution.

First, as a committed troop- and police-contributing country, we shall continue to maintain our forces and stand-by capabilities so that we can rapidly respond to United Nations peacekeeping deployments in Africa and elsewhere. We are willing to provide any possible technical assistance to African stand-by forces and transition peacekeeping

missions, as appropriate. We shall continue to offer training to African peacekeepers, building on the encouraging response we have received over the years.

Secondly, we have readily responded to opportunities for our troops and police to serve as early peacebuilders in places where they have left their footprints. In order to draw on and share the lessons and experience we have acquired in socioeconomic development, crisis management and institution-building, our Government has decided to establish a peacebuilding centre for conducting specialized training and research on sustaining peace. In this process, we look forward to building an effective interface with relevant AU initiatives, such as the AU centre for post-conflict reconstruction and development.

Thirdly, as the traditional spokesperson for the least developed countries, Bangladesh has remained at the forefront of the promotion of the interests of most African countries, including those in or emerging from conflicts. We wish to further deepen our trade, investment and development cooperation with African nations, on the basis of our complementarities and comparative advantages.

Fourthly, we see merit in further engagement with Africa to learn from another's experience in promoting the role of women in peace, security and development. As we see a paradigm shift in our society's attitudes towards the role of women in the public sphere, including in conflict prevention and resolution, we believe we have much to contribute to the evolving conversation on the contributions of women and girls as active change agents in their respective communities.

Fifthly and finally, we see criminal justice and accountability as a critical element in promoting national reconciliation in post-conflict societies. In Bangladesh, through much trial and tribulation, we have been working on developing a national criminal justice system. We would be welcome the opportunity to share our experience with interested countries in Africa and beyond with a view to helping them to strengthen their national judicial systems, in particular to account for mass atrocity crimes committed during wars and armed conflicts.

In conclusion, my delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.