

Security Council Open Debate on the Cooperation Between the UN and Regional and Subregional Organizations, August 6th 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Kim Sook, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations.

I would first like to welcome you, Madam President, to the Council Chamber, and thank you for having convened today's open debate on this important issue. I believe that your presence, along with the briefing given by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, illustrates the increasing significance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. I would like also to thank all the representatives of regional organizations for their presentations this morning. Let me also extend a warm welcome to Ambassador Samantha Power of the United States; I look forward to working closely with her in the days and months to come.

Almost seven decades ago, when the Charter of the United Nations was being drafted, public discourse on regional organizations was in its infancy. What inspired that daring attempt to devote one whole chapter to cooperation with regional arrangements proved to be a great vision. Today the complexity and diversity of threats to international peace and security require a multidimensional response. The increasing role of regional and subregional organizations, among others, constitutes a major feature of that response.

An important point is that the degree of intraregional cooperation varies significantly between regions, based on the unique historical and political background that each region possesses. It is our view that cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements will be more fruitful when that reality is duly considered. Any attempt to invent a singular, uniform modality for cooperation would prove to be inappropriate. We need to be flexible, responsive and adaptive. Most importantly, we should aspire to be as imaginative as the founding fathers of the United Nations.

Located in an area where the role of regional organizations is not prominent compared with other regions, the Republic of Korea would like to add value to today's debate by pointing out that our common efforts to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations should not inadvertently lead to an imbalance where the weight given to regional voices might result in an unintended disadvantage to those countries that do not belong to regional arrangements.

Having said that, my delegation would like to join others in acknowledging that regional and subregional organizations are better positioned to understand the root causes and context of conflicts occurring in the region to which they belong. Such organizations can play a vital role in the full cycle of conflict, covering conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

In recent years, the situation in places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Darfur and the Central African Republic have demonstrated to us both the valuable achievements and the limitations of the cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. Experience strongly indicates that a successful interaction between the United Nations and regional organizations requires the Security Council to bear the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Regional organizations play a complementary role in principle and in reality.

It is critical, therefore, that regional organizations enhance their own capacities in order to play a meaningful role in restoring peace and security. The United Nations should continue to support them by sharing the lessons learned through experience while continually exploring new ways to improve regional capacity.

The presidential statement adopted today (S/PRST/2013/12) covers comprehensive areas of cooperation. We believe that the statement will serve as a landmark reference on this issue. We appreciate Argentina's efforts in providing a valuable draft and coordinating all efforts in the process. We would like to highlight four specific points.

First, ending impunity for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law is the first step towards establishing the rule of law in the post- conflict peacebuilding process. In particular, violence and crimes against women and children should not go unpunished. We hope that regional and subregional organizations will contribute to accountability through their enhanced cooperation with international tribunals, including the International Criminal Court.

Secondly, regional organizations can significantly contribute to the effective implementation of the Security Council's sanction regimes by encouraging their members at the regional level. We also hope that all regional and subregional organizations will render their full cooperation to the Council's Sanction Committees and their Groups of Experts.

Thirdly, coordinated efforts at the national, regional and global levels are crucial to preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Sharing information and experience between and among regional organizations will help eliminate weak links, which terrorists can exploit. The Republic of Korea, as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), will spare no effort to enhance cooperation with regional organizations with a view to establishing a living network of non-proliferation.

Lastly, better coordination with regional organizations with the United Nations and among themselves will also lead to a synergic effect in addressing transnational crimes such as piracy, human and drug trafficking, and the illicit trade in small arms across borders. The United Nations can lead the way in enhancing regional and global partnerships to jointly address all types of threats to peace and security.