

**Security Council Open Debate on Preventive Diplomacy Tools: Prospects and Challenges in Africa**  
**Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)**

*Statement by Ambassador Serrano, Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations*

I would like to thank you, Madam President, for inviting the European Union to participate in this important debate. The candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

In the interest of brevity and heeding the President's call, I shall summarize the key messages set out in more detail in the printed version of this statement.

The African Union Assembly proclaimed 2010 as the Year of Peace and Security in Africa. Today's debate gives us the opportunity to share lessons from concrete situations, brief one another on the tools that are available and examine the increased cooperation with regional organizations in conflict. We see this discussion as a continuation of the Council's focus on protection issues, including last week's highly relevant debate on protection of civilians (see S/PV.6354).

Conflict prevention is one of the main objectives of the European Union's external policy. To that end, the European Union has strengthened its crisismanagement capabilities in recent years and pursues a wide range of policies and actions from development cooperation and external assistance to efforts aimed at strengthening human rights, the rule of law and accountability, along with cooperation with international partners and non-governmental organizations.

The Joint Africa-European Union Strategy, in particular the Partnership on Peace and Security, embraces a wide set of objectives and activities addressing short- and long-term security challenges. We hold regular joint consultations on crises or emerging threats, and our close cooperation is facilitated by a designated Special Adviser on African capabilities. The European Union provides funding for African-led peace support operations, and we are often invited to assist in many crisis situations in Africa through other tools at our disposal, such as EU special representatives and European Union crisis management operations.

We commend the growing role of the African Union and African regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention and mediation efforts in Africa. International contact groups are also useful tools for coordinating efforts to tackle crisis situations. Some of these bring together the African Union regional organizations, the United Nations, the European Union and other relevant partners. We could do more to strengthen relations among these organizations by developing a common methodology for identifying and addressing emerging conflicts and the capacities needed.

In implementing the African Union-European Union Action Plan on the Peace and Security Partnership, we put particular emphasis on cooperation in the field of mediation as a tool of first response to emerging or ongoing crises. The United Nations is certainly the most important and experienced actor in the area of mediation. At the same time, regional and subregional actors are increasingly the first to respond, given their knowledge of local and regional dynamics and their credibility in the regional context.

Our cooperation therefore aims at developing a common understanding and broad guidelines, through regular African Union-European Union-United Nations exchanges.

As other speakers before me have stressed, justice contributes to the consolidation of peace and to conflict prevention. The experience in Africa shows how accountability for the most serious crimes must be part of any lasting solution, not least for its deterrent effect on ongoing conflicts. Accountability for past violations of human rights, as well as the overall reform of the justice sector, should thus be integrated in security sector reform and other institution-building efforts.

The Peacebuilding Commission also plays an important preventive role regarding the countries on its agenda. In our view, the Peacebuilding Support Office should deepen its interaction with other actors within the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Development Programme and the Department of Political Affairs, in particular the Mediation Support Unit, in order to exchange experiences and build on best practices. The United Nations Inter-agency Framework Team plays a helpful role in that regard.

**Looking ahead to the coming months, in particular the tenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in the autumn, we should never underestimate the key role that women can play in conflict prevention. Women are often powerful and capable actors in their communities, and the information provided by women's groups can be valuable in the early detection of tensions. Women should be encouraged and enabled to participate equally and actively in formal and informal mediation processes and peace negotiations. Africa has led the way in operationalizing resolution 1325 (2000).** In this anniversary year, much more remains to be done to fully implement that landmark document. The European Union will strongly support such efforts.