

**Security Council Open Debate
Cooperation Between the UN and Regional and Subregional Organizations
Peace Operations: the UN-African Union Partnership and its Evolution
December 2014, Security Council Chamber**

Statement by Ms. Murmokaite Permanent Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations.

I thank the Chadian presidency of the Security Council for organizing this open debate on cooperation between regional and subregional organizations on peace operations, with a focus on the United Nations and African Union (AU) partnership. My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be made later by the observer of the European Union (EU).

This is the third debate this year in which we discuss in the Council the issue of cooperation between regional and subregional organizations, which only confirms the relevance and importance of this cooperation.

Some 70 per cent of the United Nations special political missions and peacekeeping operations are deployed in Africa. The continent's regional and subregional organizations have been actively involved in addressing the multilayered challenges facing the continent, and their cooperation with the United Nations and other regional partners, such as the EU, has evolved significantly over the years. Many AU operations have been rehatted into United Nations peacekeeping missions.

African capacities are a critical resource for United Nations peacekeeping, and United Nations support is a critical enabler for AU operations. The effectiveness of the United Nations and AU peacekeeping efforts is therefore interdependent on many levels. The EU also plays an important role by providing funding, as in the case of the African Union Mission in Somalia, bridging missions, as in the Central African Republic, or contributing to capacity-building and training, as in Mali, where Lithuanian trainers are part of the EU training mission in Koulikoro. the EU's anti-piracy mission off the coast of Somalia, where Lithuania has participated since 2011, has been instrumental in reducing the threat of piracy in the region.

At the fourth EU-Africa Summit, earlier this year, EU leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture and to supporting training and capacity-building of African forces. The EU is working, through its African Peace Facility capacity-building component, to increase the capacity of the AU and of regional economic communities in the planning and conduct of peace operations. Such synergies are critical for the overall success of peace operations and need to be further developed. Enhancing this collaboration, including and based on the lessons learned from recent transitions of authorities from AU peace support operations to United Nations peacekeeping missions, is crucial.

As other representatives have noted, owing to their knowledge of the region, regional and subregional organizations are best positioned to understand the root causes of a conflict and to take early preventive action, which is a key advantage in seeking to defuse a crisis before it explodes. Effective and timely partnerships can help prevent a conflict at its early stages, as recently demonstrated in the Burkina Faso crisis, where the joint mediation efforts of the

United Nations, the AU and Economic Community of West African States proved to be useful to push the military back to the path of constitutional legality. That only reinforces the importance of strengthening AU and United Nations capacities for early warning, conflict analysis, dialogue and mediation, and the need for increased AU-United Nations collaboration in the area of good offices between the envoys of the two.

The strengths of regional bodies as first and rapid responders to African crises must be acknowledged and further developed. We welcome the AU's progress in rapid deployment in response to emerging crises, especially those that endanger civilians, and the commitment made by African leaders to operationalize the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises. The development of policies and guidelines, as well as training for the African Standby Force, as part of the African Peace and Security Architecture, should be further supported.

Getting the partnerships right at the political, strategic, institutional and operational levels is important in order to increase actual success in the field. Better understanding of each other's working methods and procedures and decision-making processes would improve cooperation and increase transparency. Deepening the strategic dialogue between the United Nations and regional organizations, as well as identifying concrete opportunities for joint planning at both the strategic and operational levels, would greatly benefit the collective action on the ground.

Further strengthening relations between the United Nations Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council, including through truly interactive substantive annual consultative meetings, timely consultations and collaborative field missions, would enhance the strategic partnership and help to formulate coherent positions and strategies to address current crises. More effective and frequent communication between the Presidents of the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council would also contribute to a timely exchange of information on decision-making processes.

A strong partnership with the African Union is fundamental in mainstreaming protection-of-civilians mechanisms in all peace and security activities, including through the framework of cooperation between the United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the African Union Commission Concerning the Prevention and Response to Conflict-related Sexual Violence in Africa, the designation by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for a Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security; enhanced collaboration between the Peace and Security Department of the AU Commission and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflicts.

Today we express our condolences to the people of Pakistan after the savage attack on a school in Peshawar. African States, too, have seen their share of attacks against schools and children. The shocking abduction of the Nigerian girls by Boko Haram earlier this year is just one of the many cases of such attacks. Closer United Nations cooperation with Africa's regional and subregional organizations is essential for tackling terrorism and other trans-boundary threats. Enhanced intelligence information-sharing and effective sanctions implementation are important tools in countering terrorism. The role of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa and the efforts of the African Centre for Studies

and Research on Terrorism should be commended in that regard. To stem terrorist financing, strengthening joint efforts in tackling human trafficking, illicit flows of arms, illegal trade in natural resources and poaching, among others, is required.

We look forward to the Secretary-General's assessment report and recommendations on ways to strengthen regional partnerships in peacekeeping operations and further discussions on the issue. We also look forward to the report by the High-level Independent Panel to Review Peace Operations.