

**Mr. Buffin** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the President of the Security Council for taking the initiative to organize this debate, which allows us to address the important issue of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union on peace and security. I would also like to express my gratitude for the briefings.

Belgium fully endorses the statement just made on behalf of the European Union. I wish to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Today's debate is important because it is on the African continent that cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is the most developed. At the same time, it is there that such cooperation is the most necessary, in view of the numerous challenges to peace and security that arise there. This debate is also important because it makes it possible to recall the added value of regional organizations in resolving and preventing conflict thanks to their knowledge of the

terrain, the protagonists and mindsets, not to mention their interest in promoting stability in their immediate environment. In short, there is a complementarity of action between the United Nations and regional organizations that should be strengthened, in particular in view of finding African solutions to African problems. I should like to make the following comments on the specific issue of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union on peace and security.

First, in recent years we have noted the development of a growing and varied partnership between the United Nations and the African Union. That partnership has resulted in very concrete results, such as the takeover of an African Union mission by a United Nations mission, in Mali and in the Central African Republic, and the logistical support provided by the African Union Mission in Somalia, to name just a two. Those developments are encouraging insofar as they reflect an increasing interaction and a shared vision of peacekeeping.

Furthermore, I believe that there is another area of operation to explore with regard to peacekeeping technical capabilities. The Department of Field Support has developed unequalled know-how in that area, especially in organizational and logistical matters. In that regard, the African Union might benefit from a transfer of knowledge for the development of its security architecture.

As a State member of the European Union (EU), Belgium is, moreover, in favour of pursuing a relationship of tripartite cooperation among the European Union, the United Nations and the African Union. I recall that the European Union has played a pioneering role in the area of cooperation with the African Union. To this day, it remains the main financial contributor to the peacekeeping operations of the African Union. The tried-and-tested European Union African Peace Facility should be maintained. For all that, the

search for a lasting solution to the issue of financing for African Union peacekeeping operations must continue. In that regard, we welcome the commitment undertaken by States members of the African Union at the January 2015 Summit to shoulder 25 per cent of the cost of those operations by the end of the decade.

In practical terms, deepening cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union that Belgium would wish to see could advance through the implementation of some simple and practical measures. In terms of information exchange, for example, we would suggest that United Nations representatives and special envoys be regularly invited to speak before the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. Conversely, the various envoys and facilitators of the African Union should also appear regularly to express their views before the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission when crisis situations or matters of mutual interest so require. That would promote the direct exchange of information and good practices and more consistent analyses.

Another area in which the importance of close cooperation between the two organizations is crucial is support for electoral processes. Elections are an area of activity where the African Union and the United Nations must work together in a concerted effort of mediation and conflict prevention. The 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance could be a useful reference point in that regard.

In that regard, the Democratic Republic of the Congo provides us with a specific situation where the African Union is working to launch a dialogue between the opposition and the Government in order to shape the electoral process, and could benefit from significant support from the United Nations. In Burundi, too, the good understanding between the United Nations and the African Union, via coordinated action between their respective special envoys, is essential to support subregional mediation. A complementary approach could be adopted, as necessary, between the observers of African Union, who are already deployed in the country, and the future United Nations police mission. Furthermore, the United Nations has mediation expertise that can be very useful in such situations and should be shared with the African Union.

In conclusion, Belgium welcomes the initiatives of the African Union aimed at implementing resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. I am thinking specifically of the appointment in January 2014 of Ms. Bineta Diop as Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security by the President of the African Union Commission. I also note the launch in June 2014 of the five-year Gender, Peace and Security programme, which was designed to increase the participation of women in promoting peace and security, while enhancing their protection in conflict and post-conflict situations in Africa.

There is a complementarity of action and clear common goals between the African Union and the United Nations in working for the maintenance of international peace and security. Political, operational and logistical cooperation is possible. It is therefore our wish that our debate today helps to lay a new milestone on the path of strengthening the partnership between those two organizations with a view to ending the too many conflicts that still plague Africa and its peoples.