

Open Debate on “Regional Organizations and Contemporary Challenges of Global Security” by Ambassador Bhagwant S. Bishnoi, Acting Permanent Representative at the United Nations Security Council on August 18, 2015

Madam President,

We thank you for organizing today's debate on Regional Organizations and Contemporary Challenges of Global Security. We thank your delegation for the useful concept note that has been prepared. We also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary General for the comprehensive briefing that he has provided.

Madam President,

India supports the role of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 8 of the UN Charter. The role discharged by these organizations should, however, be consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. The principles of national sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of states must be fully respected.

It is also our belief that the peaceful resolution of conflicts should be the first priority – both of the UN Security Council and of regional organizations. The recent report of the High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations has highlighted the fact that peace keeping cannot substitute for political solutions. No purpose would be served by having regional organizations struggle to manage conflict with military tools while political processes are either not underway or have not been concluded.

Madam President,

Chapter 8 of the UN Charter refers to regional arrangements and agencies. There is, therefore, a clear requirement of vicinity or geographical contiguity. It is important to note that Chapter 8 does not envisage any role for organizations formed on any other basis, be they of language, religion or historical coincidence. Any overly liberal interpretation of

terminology would be violative of the Charter besides also being counter productive.

We would also like to caution that while regional organizations can at times play a useful role in assisting the UN, the primacy of the United Nations itself cannot be denied. Talking of Africa, the United Nations cannot disengage with the continent by sub-contracting peacekeeping to regional arrangements. We would need to start worrying if the impartiality of peacekeeping was called into questions. This, however, is a possibility that cannot be ruled out with the regionalization and sub-regionalization of peacekeeping.

In cases where the United Nations does depend on regional organizations for peacekeeping, it is important that there be full consultations before arrangements are put into place. This would mean that troop contributing countries should be invited to participate in the decisions of the Council in accordance with Article 44 of the Charter. This is necessary for mandates to be realistic and also for obtaining the full cooperation of those who will actually be carrying out implementation on the ground.

Madam President,

We would like to take this opportunity to call attention to the fact that the Charter has clear provisions for the Council being kept fully informed of actions undertaken under regional arrangements for the maintenance of international peace and security. This information is, however, not shared with the wider membership of the United Nations. We would like to request that consideration be given to including this information in the annual reports of the Security Council.

Madam President,

We would, in conclusion, like to draw your attention to the fact that at least two thirds of the work of the Security Council relates to Africa. There is, however, no representation of that continent in the permanent membership of the Council. This shortcoming seriously undermines the legitimacy of the decisions of the Council. Till such time that this historical injustice is addressed, the decisions of the Council will lack their full force. The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization, in our view, provides a most opportune moment to rectify this grave lacuna.