

Annex to the letter dated 3 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security: strengthening the partnership synergy between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

Concept paper of Azerbaijan

Introduction

In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, Member States conferred on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and agreed that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf (Art. 24). Chapter VIII of the Charter also encourages cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements in the peaceful settlement of disputes (Arts. 52 and 53).

International peace and security are faced nowadays with many threats and challenges, and it is imperative that the United Nations and regional and other organizations enhance their cooperation to address them comprehensively and effectively.

As part of its presidency of the Security Council in October 2013, Azerbaijan intends to convene a high-level meeting with the purpose of exploring ideas and measures for strengthening the partnership synergy between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Past resolutions, presidential statements of the Security Council and relevant reports of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations can be useful references.

Background

With 57 member States from four continents, OIC (formerly Organization of the Islamic Conference) is the second largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations (see www.oic-oci.org).

The Charter of OIC, adopted in 2008, stressed the determination of its member States "to contribute to international peace and security, understanding and dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions, and promote and encourage friendly relations and good neighbourliness, mutual respect and cooperation" (ibid.).

OIC is an important partner of the United Nations in promoting peace and security and fostering a culture of peace at the global level (see General Assembly resolution 67/264). OIC has enjoyed observer status in the General Assembly since 1975 (General Assembly resolution 3369 (XXX)). It was among organizations invited by the Security Council, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to participate and make statements at the Council's previous deliberations on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security.

In his report, the Secretary-General of the United Nations recognized the enhancement of practical cooperation and the building of complementarity between the United Nations and OIC (see A/67/280-S/2012/614, paras. 106-116). In its resolution 67/264, the General Assembly expressed its conviction that the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and OIC contributed to the promotion of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

In 2012, the Secretary-General of the United Nations visited, for the first time, the headquarters of OIC. A general meeting on cooperation between the two organizations was held in Geneva in 2012, during which they declared strong commitment to reinforcing cooperation in areas of common interest, such as conflict prevention and mediation, human rights, humanitarian assistance and refugees, the fight against terrorism and intercultural dialogue. The strengthened spirit of cooperation manifested itself in the agreement on a matrix of activities within the framework of United Nations-OIC collaboration, to be implemented over the next biennium (*ibid.*, para. 106).

On 3 and 4 April 2012, OIC, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe held, at the OIC secretariat in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, a joint consultative session on consolidating the role of mediation attended by senior officials from prominent regional and international organizations (see General Assembly resolution 67/264). The participants exchanged views on the role of OIC in conflict prevention and resolution and on the prospects for further developing cooperation between the three organizations. They also discussed follow-up efforts towards the implementation of the milestone resolution of the General Assembly on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution (resolution 65/283).

In 2012, the United Nations and OIC agreed on a one-year partnership programme, which aims at enhancing their cooperation and exchange of experiences and at strengthening the operational capacity of OIC in the area of mediation through the establishment of a mediation unit (A/67/280-S/2012/614, para. 108).

The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and OIC explored possible areas of cooperation within the framework of Security Council resolution 1963 (2010), particularly with regard to the adoption of national counter-terrorism strategies (*ibid.*, para. 109). From 28 to 30 May 2013, OIC, with the cooperation of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, held a meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Security Council resolution 1624 (2005), with a focus on countering incitement to commit terrorist acts and enhancing cultural dialogue.^a The Executive Directorate also agreed to facilitate the engagement of OIC with the Global Counterterrorism Forum.

In order to address the threats and challenges facing the OIC member States, the Islamic Summit Conference, at its third extraordinary session, held in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, on 7 and 8 December 2005, adopted the Ten-year Programme of Action to Meet the Challenges Facing the Muslim Ummah in the Twenty-first Century (A/60/633-S/2005/826, annex III). It called, *inter alia*, for strengthening of OIC activities in conflict prevention, confidence-building, peacekeeping, conflict

^a Additional information about the event is available from www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/news/2013-05-31_jeddah.html.

resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation in cooperation with international and regional organizations.

The United Nations has worked closely with OIC in efforts to restore peace and security in Somalia, Afghanistan, and the Sudan/Darfur. OIC opened offices in Kabul and Mogadishu in 2011. In Afghanistan, OIC held discussions with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to support the intra-Afghan reconciliation process. The United Nations and OIC have worked together to facilitate negotiations between Darfuri armed movements and the Government of the Sudan (*ibid.*, para. 107). The two organizations have worked together in reconstruction and development on Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sierra Leone and Somalia (General Assembly resolution 67/264, para. 13). The United Nations and OIC also share common objectives in promoting and facilitating the Middle East peace process (*ibid.*, para. 4), as well as in fostering solutions to other conflicts in accordance with the generally accepted norms and principles of international law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Over the years, the United Nations and OIC have developed partnership and cooperation in humanitarian, human rights, social, economic and cultural fields, as well as in combating religious intolerance and discrimination. OIC is one of the active contributors to international efforts aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding within the framework of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and other initiatives in this regard (see General Assembly resolution 67/264).

Areas to be explored

In addition to reviewing progress made in developing and strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and OIC, the meeting may focus on, but not be limited to, the following issues:

- What are the opportunities and the appropriate approaches that can better serve the purpose of enhancing interaction and cooperation between the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, and OIC?
- How can the role and responsibilities of OIC as an intergovernmental organization be better defined in line with the Charter of the United Nations?
- What are the opportunities for a more comprehensive engagement of OIC in the efforts of the United Nations in the fields of preventive diplomacy and mediation?
- How can the advantages possessed by OIC be better utilized to enable early responses to disputes and emerging crises?
- What are the opportunities for closer cooperation between the two organizations in conflict prevention, confidence-building, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction processes?
- How can coordination be further improved at the institutional level between the two organizations?
- How to increase technical and other forms of assistance to OIC and its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions in order to strengthen their capacities for cooperation.

Format of the meeting

The meeting will be held in a briefing format at the ministerial level and will be presided over by the high-level representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is anticipated that the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of OIC will address the meeting.



Security Council

Distr.: General
28 October 2013

Original: English

Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 7050th meeting of the Security Council, held on 28 October 2013, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council recalls the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and reaffirms its primary responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security.

"The Security Council reiterates that cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations and arrangements in matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, and consistent with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, can improve collective security.

"The Security Council recalls its previous relevant resolutions and statements of its President which underscore the importance of developing effective partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant statutes of the regional and subregional organizations.

"The Security Council expresses its appreciation for the briefings of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, and the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu.

"The Security Council recognizes and further encourages the active contribution of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in the work of the United Nations towards the realization of the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

"The Security Council acknowledges the continuing dialogue between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in the fields of peacemaking, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The Security Council commends the States Members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for their ongoing commitment to international peacekeeping and peacebuilding, including through the contribution of troops to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

"The Security Council reiterates its commitment to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and to seek a comprehensive



resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and recalls in this regard its previous relevant resolutions. The Council notes that the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation share common objectives in promoting and facilitating the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the political solution of the Syrian conflict in accordance with the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012, as well as in fostering solutions to other conflicts in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

“The Security Council takes note of the general meeting on cooperation between the Secretariats of the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and their specialized organizations, held in Geneva on 1-3 May 2012. The Council acknowledges the intention expressed by representatives of both organizations to reinforce cooperation in areas of common interest, such as conflict prevention and mediation, human rights, humanitarian assistance and refugees, intercultural dialogue, and the fight against terrorism.

“The Council notes the commitment of both the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of tolerance and peace, and calls for enhanced cooperation to promote better understanding across countries, cultures and civilizations.

“The Security Council recognizes the importance of strengthening cooperation with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security.

“The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to include in his next biannual report to the Security Council and the General Assembly on Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations, recommendations on ways to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.”



Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

Provisional

7050th meeting
Monday, 28 October 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Mammadyarov	(Azerbaijan)
<i>Members:</i>	Argentina	Ms. Squeff
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Araud
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Morocco	Ms. Bouaida
	Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sul Kyung-hoon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	Togo	Mr. M'Beou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

Strengthening the partnership synergy between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

Letter dated 3 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2013/588)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

Strengthening the partnership synergy between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

Letter dated 3 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2013/588)

The President: I wish to welcome the Secretary-General and other representatives participating in today's meeting. Their presence is an affirmation of the importance of the subject to be addressed.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/588, which contains a letter dated 3 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, containing a concept paper on the item to be considered.

I now have the honour to give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: Let me begin by recognizing Mr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and thanking him for his many years of leadership and service. I congratulate his successor, the incoming OIC Secretary-General, Mr. Iyad Madani, who also joins us today. Last year, I was honoured to be the first United Nations Secretary-General to visit the OIC headquarters. I look forward to building on our partnership in the years to come.

Mr. President, I really appreciate your taking the time to preside this very important Council meeting,

and I count on your leadership and commitment to peace and security in the Council presidency.

The challenges of peace and security are too complex and interlinked for any country or organization to address alone. To be successful, we must join forces and craft joint strategies that draw on respective strengths. The United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation are working closely on issues ranging from conflict prevention and conflict resolution to counter-terrorism, from human rights and humanitarian affairs to intercultural dialogue and sustainable development. I shall touch on a number of specific issues where our work continues to be critical.

With regard to Syria, our ongoing cooperation includes humanitarian and political efforts. The United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons are making progress in dismantling and destroying Syria's chemical weapons programme. But we must spare no effort to reach a comprehensive political agreement, one that reflects the will of the Syrian people. The war has also heightened tensions between Sunni and Shia communities. We have seen tragic and violent manifestations of those divisions in many parts of the Muslim world. That is profoundly worrying. I believe the OIC could be uniquely placed to launch a major initiative, working with the United Nations and others to help bring an end to this upheaval that has caused the loss of so many civilian lives and represents such a threat to wider security. I urge the OIC and all leaders to do everything possible to repair rifts and rebuild confidence between Muslim communities, as well as to stem the influence of radical armed groups and violent extremists.

On the Middle East peace process, direct talks have resumed, but Israelis and Palestinians must quickly see visible peace dividends. The status quo in the occupied Palestinian territory is not sustainable, and in the long run, the occupation is deeply damaging to Israelis and Palestinians alike. The OIC can help forge a way forward within the agreed time frame.

As Myanmar continues on the path of reform, a key challenge will be to address the underlying factors of communal tensions, including the question of citizenship for the Rohingya population. Myanmar must act firmly against the dissemination of hate literature, and instigators must be punished. I urge the Government and other key opinion leaders to address those fundamental issues. I am pleased that an OIC

delegation will soon visit Myanmar, and I welcome its constructive engagement to reduce tensions.

In Afghanistan, efforts to enhance regional cooperation and build trust are crucial at this time of transition. I appreciate the efforts of the OIC, including through its presence in Kabul and its support for an Afghan-led reconciliation process.

In Mali, following the milestone presidential election, the United Nations, the OIC and other partners should work together to help Mali promote dialogue and reconciliation, improve governance, undertake security sector reform, re-establish State authority in the north and protect human rights.

In the Sudan, I commend the OIC's continued efforts, especially those facilitated by the State of Qatar, to bring peace to Darfur. I count on the ongoing cooperation with the OIC to encourage the Government of the Sudan to reach out to all stakeholders.

We must also continue to work for progress on issues that extend beyond regional boundaries.

Terrorism is not associated with any particular religion, culture or peoples. However, in recent years, terrorist violence has disproportionately affected countries that are members of OIC, from the Sahel and North Africa to the Middle East and South Asia. The OIC and its member States have been making significant efforts to mitigate the terrorist threat, particularly in countering incitement to commit terrorist acts motivated by extremism and intolerance. I stress the importance of addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of extremism and terrorism, including by strengthening efforts to resolve conflict peacefully, promote the rule of law, protect human rights and ensure good governance.

Intercultural dialogue between and within faiths is more important than ever. Let us keep working together to foster a culture of peace and co-existence, through efforts such as the Alliance of Civilizations.

Looking ahead, the United Nations and the OIC must continue to deepen their strategic dialogue. We have made significant progress, including through formal partnership agreements and joint workplans, staff exchanges and joint mediation deployments. We were also proud to assist the OIC in establishing its new Peace, Security and Mediation Unit. Let us together pledge to work from this foundation of progress to build a better world for all.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. İhsanoğlu.

Mr. İhsanoğlu (Organization of Islamic Cooperation): At the outset, I would like to express our thanks and appreciation to the Government of Azerbaijan for taking the initiative of organizing this unique and timely meeting. The fact that the Security Council has accepted to convene today's debate on cooperation between Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the United Nations shows the importance it rightly attaches to it. I should also like to highlight the importance of the excellent ideas contained in the concept paper prepared by the delegation of Azerbaijan (S/2013/588), which further develops that important issue. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Azerbaijan for its outstanding performance during its tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council and in the chair for this month.

I wish to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his tireless efforts in bringing increasing significance to the existing relations and cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC. I personally would like to thank him for his kind words just now. We share his vision about the strategic cooperation between the two organizations.

During my term in office as OIC Secretary-General, I have established an important working relationship with Mr Ban Ki Moon. We have discussed on a regular basis many issues that also top the agenda of the Security Council, such as the Middle East, Syria, Somalia, Mali and Afghanistan.

In his recent statement before the OIC Annual Coordination Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs on 27 September, on the sidelines of the general debate of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General requested that the OIC strengthen its partnership with the United Nations in all areas of mutual concern and interest. From our part, we attach great importance to the relationship with the United Nations and stand ready to develop an effective partnership with it to promote peace, justice, human rights and development.

Based on our firm belief that the critical role the international organizations play, we have made tremendous efforts to build and sustain a network of close cooperative relationships with the United Nations

and other international, regional and subregional organizations in order to secure an inter-organizational platform for the benefit of global peace, security and economic development.

International peace and development are now faced with many difficulties and challenges, and it is imperative to respond to them collectively at the national, regional and international levels. In a rapidly changing world, strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC will both promote multilateralism and boost the international collective security mechanism.

Proceeding from its new vision and mission of moderation and modernization, the OIC has continued to play an important role in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, promoting post-conflict reconstruction, defusing humanitarian crises, combating terrorism and promoting socioeconomic development in its member States as an important contribution to global efforts in the promotion of international peace and security. In that regard, the OIC has expressed on many occasions that it stands ready today to develop an effective partnership with the United Nations to enhance cooperation in all fields and to evolve early responses to disputes and emerging crises.

As the second-largest political intergovernmental organization, with 57 member States and five observers, and with a mission to defend the interests and just causes of its member States, the OIC, based on its charter, was established on the noble principles of peace, harmony, tolerance, brotherhood and the equality of all human beings, as preached by Islam. The preamble of its charter reaffirms the commitment of its member States to the Charter of the United Nations. It has therefore, since its establishment, set for itself as a primary task the realization of the principles and purposes of the United Nations, and it has striven to play a positive role in the maintenance of international peace and security. The perceptions of the member States of the organization, all of which are also Members of the United Nations, are identical to those of the vast majority of the United Nations membership on important international issues.

The OIC charter stresses the importance of all member States adhering to the principles of the maintenance of international peace and security and representing the national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of other member States. An OIC road map document, adopted in December 2005

and entitled 10-year programme of action to meet the challenges facing the Muslim Ummah in the twenty-first century, which parallels the Millennium Development Goals, is one that we consider to be a blueprint for reform, promoting moderation and modernization in the Muslim world. It calls for strengthening OIC activities in conflict prevention, confidence-building, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation in cooperation with international and regional organizations, the United Nations being the first among them.

The OIC General Secretariat has made sustained efforts to increase the role of the organization in the maintenance of peace and security, conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Under its programme and agenda for reform, the Peace, Security and Mediation Unit; a centre for the development of women; the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission; and the International Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs Department have been established. Those significant steps also indicate our understanding of the importance of socioeconomic development, human rights and humanitarian assistance in promoting peace and security.

In that regard, the OIC has made valuable contributions to the work of the United Nations in the fields of conflict prevention, crisis management, mediation, humanitarian assistance, the promotion of human rights, the rule of law and sustainable development through the many political, economic and social instruments available to it. Accordingly, the OIC has hosted at its headquarters in Jeddah a number of international contact groups, such as those for Afghanistan and Somalia, as well regional organizations, mediation meetings and counter-terrorism workshops. The United Nations-OIC general biannual consultation meeting provides an excellent opportunity for both organizations to identify all areas of cooperation with a specific time frame for implementation.

We are also in the process of preparing a promising joint action to support human development in Somalia. The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and the OIC General Secretariat are developing a project for capacity in education, health care and sustainable livelihoods in Somalia.

We look forward for more engagement with the United Nations to enhance the capacity of the OIC on the basis of its needs and strategic priorities to enable it to act as an effective United Nations partner in

addressing the immediate and future challenges that face the Muslim world. The United Nations-African Union example of partnerships in the areas of peace, security and development are good examples to be followed in that regard.

Many of the issues on the agenda of the Security Council relate to the Muslim world, and the OIC is naturally seized of them. That fact demonstrates the importance of having strong links of cooperation and coordination between the OIC and the United Nations in order to benefit from global and local approaches to addressing those issues. At the same time, I would like to emphasize the need of expediting the reform of the Security Council by promoting its transparency, accountability, adequate representation and full democratization so as to enable it to play its full role in the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Our principled position is that any reform of the Security Council must ensure adequate representation for OIC member States in any category of membership, given that our organization represents 57 member States and 1.6 billion people.

While a period of extraordinary challenges is still evolving in the Middle East, a credible peace process towards a two-State solution remains a core priority for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. I would like to reaffirm that the international community and this organ in particular have a special responsibility to do its utmost to solve the Palestinian question, according to the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Israeli-Palestinian agreements reached within the framework of the Middle East peace process.

The OIC believes that the key to reaching a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East lies in ending the Israeli occupation that started in 1967 and by establishing an independent and sovereign Palestinian State. Therefore, we believe that the ongoing direct Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations provide a valuable window of opportunity that should not be missed. Creating conditions conducive to peace also requires that all illegal and harmful acts, including the construction of settlements, should be immediately stopped.

At the same time, we remain committed to assisting the Palestinian people in improving their socioeconomic life. Therefore, the OIC is ready to build

a constructive partnership with the United Nations to improve the socioeconomic life of the Palestinians in the Palestinian territories, including occupied East Jerusalem. The development agencies of both the OIC and the United Nations can cooperate in creating a better life for the Palestinians.

The OIC remains deeply concerned by the ongoing conflict in Syria. We welcome all efforts aimed at convening the "Geneva II" conference. However, we believe that the Security Council needs to assume its responsibility to do its utmost to protect the Syrian people and to find a peaceful solution to the Syrian conflict through political dialogue.

We are also concerned by Armenia's continued occupation of the Azerbaijani territories of Nagorno Karabakh, and we call for a resolution of that conflict based on respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in line with Security Council resolutions in that regard. Non-implementation of the Council's resolutions undermines its authority and people's belief in justice and in the possibility of peaceful political settlement.

While I commend the leading role played by the United Nations and other partners in the restoration of peace to two troubled OIC member States, Somalia and Mali, we must continue to build on that partnership in order to achieve durable stability in those two African countries.

On the humanitarian front, the OIC and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs conducted a joint needs assessment mission in Syria in 2012 that resulted in a comprehensive humanitarian response plan. Likewise, a similar mission in the Sahel was conducted by our two organizations, which visited the Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali. Another joint mission was visited Mindanao and the Philippines. Furthermore, several appeals have been launched and some OIC member States have come forward to alleviate the suffering of the vulnerable and needy people in Mali. Our cooperation is also continuing in Somalia. We have done our best to help meet the humanitarian needs in Myanmar by facilitating the provision of assistance from OIC member States and civil society. We will discuss the matter with the authorities of Myanmar during the expected visit of myself and a group of Ministers of Foreign Affairs from the OIC member States to the country next month.

Under the mandate of its Charter, the OIC aims to play a constructive role in helping non-member countries with Muslim minorities to resolve any issues with those minorities in order to strengthen their role as bridges of friendship between their nations and the Muslim world, in full respect for the national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the countries hosting those minorities.

Polio eradication in affected OIC member States continues to be a critical challenge for the OIC. We are engaged in close cooperation with the World Health Organization and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, as well as with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in a wide campaign to eradicate polio in our affected countries. We are involved in advocacy and in mobilizing high-level political support for polio vaccination programmes. We believe that more work needs to be done before we are able to claim total polio free-status in the OIC region. In that regard, we are concerned by the recent spread of polio in the Horn of Africa.

Due to the increase in the number of humanitarian disasters in OIC member States, the OIC General Secretariat has felt that there is a vital need to establish an OIC humanitarian emergency response fund in order to promote collective humanitarian relief to the most vulnerable segments of our populations whenever a disaster strikes one of our member States.

One of the most daunting challenges facing the international community is the radicalization of communities based on religious faith and belief. The religious and intercommunal hatred propagated by some motivated and extremist individuals encourages marginalization, negative stereotyping and racial discrimination, posing a serious threat to global peace and security. The OIC has been vigilant in exposing the dangerous agenda of extremist elements and in raising global awareness to combat religious intolerance, stigmatization and negative stereotyping.

I would also like to emphasize the importance of the political engagement and support of world leaders for dialogue, mutual recognition, respect and cooperation among the representatives of cultures, civilizations and religions, as this issue has recently acquired greater significance due to its implications for international peace and security. The consensual passage of Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 on combating religious intolerance, which codified the eight points I identified in my address to the fifteenth session of the Human

Rights Council, has been widely acknowledged as a positive development and a triumph of multilateralism.

I would like to assure the Council that the OIC will continue to work with its member States and the international community as a whole to combat the radicalization that leads to violent extremism and terrorism. We believe that confronting that menace requires political will and commitment on the part not only of Governments but all segments of society.

The OIC has also been focusing on key development issues, including the empowerment of women, children, youth and civil society, in order to benefit from their roles and contributions in the search for local remedies to the challenges of conflict, underdevelopment and radicalization. We also encourage all initiatives that promote the positive contribution of religious and traditional leaders to meeting those challenges.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the OIC is strongly committed to an active partnership with the United Nations in promoting peace, security and development. We have achieved a great deal together, but I believe that more work remains to be done. With the Council's support, both organizations can make our world a much better place.

The President: I thank Mr. İhsanoğlu for his very informative briefing.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank Council members for their valuable contributions to the statement. In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2013/16.

I will now make a statement in my capacity as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan.

Today, the Security Council is considering for the first time the question of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in a special meeting. That fact speaks for itself. The OIC is not only the organization that represents all Muslim nations; it is the second-largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations, with 57 member States and five observers from four continents. The beginning of cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC goes back to

1975, when the General Assembly adopted resolution 3369 (XXX). Since then, the OIC has proved to be an important partner of the United Nations in promoting peace and security and fostering a culture of peace at the global level.

Many of the issues on the Security Council's agenda relate to the Islamic world, and the OIC is naturally seized of them. This fact necessitates closer cooperation and coordination between the Security Council and the OIC in order to benefit from global, regional and local approaches in addressing those issues.

A just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and the comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict remain among the most pressing issues on the agenda of both the United Nations and the OIC. Azerbaijan welcomes efforts aimed at the resumption of direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine. It is imperative that the parties demonstrate a sense of responsibility in sustaining international efforts towards achieving the two-State solution and avoid actions that would undermine this objective, with the ultimate goal of restoring and enhancing peace, security and sustainable development in the entire region.

In June, Azerbaijan hosted the Conference of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on the establishment of an Islamic financial safety net in support of Palestine and a donors conference in support of the city of Al-Quds. The OIC member States and international organizations that attended the conferences pledged to contribute to improving Palestine's economy, infrastructure, health care and education.

With regard to Syria, we hope that the unanimous and strong position demonstrated recently by the Security Council will contribute to finding a political solution to the conflict in that country, putting an end to the suffering of the Syrian people and ensuring compliance by the parties concerned with their obligations and commitments under international law.

Under the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council is conferred with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Therefore, as a matter of priority, apart from the Council's credibility and effectiveness, special attention should be given to the implementation of its resolutions, in particular those related to the prevention and settlement of conflicts.

Twenty years ago, in 1993, the Security Council adopted four resolutions in response to the use of force against Azerbaijan and the occupation and ethnic cleansing of about 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territory by neighbouring Armenia, which resulted in the emergence of almost 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons. This means that every ninth person among the 9 million Azerbaijanis is either a refugee or a displaced person.

These resolutions — 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) — reaffirmed respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the inviolability of its international borders, and demanded the immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories. Unfortunately, key Security Council demands have still not been implemented, and the mediation efforts conducted for more than 20 years within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have yet to yield results.

Since the eruption of the conflict, the OIC, on the basis of the aforementioned resolutions of the Security Council, has explicitly determined the actions of Armenia on the territory of Azerbaijan as aggression. A series of OIC decisions aimed at the implementation of Security Council resolutions have been instrumental in the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan being addressed by the international community, including in particular within the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Armenia's annexationist policy has absolutely no chance of success. Nagorno Karabakh is a historical, inalienable and integral part of Azerbaijan. The only way to achieve a settlement of the conflict and to establish civilized relations between the two neighbouring States is for Armenia to de-occupy the Azerbaijani territories, fully re-establish the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and immediately provide for compliance with the inalienable right of refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes. It is therefore important that in its presidential statement S/PRST/2013/16, adopted today, the Security Council emphasizes the common objectives shared by the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in fostering solutions to conflicts in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Here, there is a need to emphasize the fundamental contribution that the Islamic culture has made to global

civilization, world science and education. Islam is the religion of moderation, and by its very name, which means "peace", it advocates and implies tolerance and respect for other religions and faiths. Misperceptions about Islam and Muslims have become the most persistent and virulent sources of the phenomenon of Islamophobia, resulting in prejudicial practices and incitement against Muslims without distinction.

Attempts to create a conceptual link between Islam and terror are unacceptable. The war on terrorism should not be used to target or label any particular religion or culture. The current state of affairs confirms a vital need for joint efforts and dialogue to counter instances of defamation and misconceptions. It is therefore critical to persistently stress the importance of respect and understanding for religious and cultural diversity throughout the world. The common commitment of both the United Nations and the OIC to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of tolerance and peace and their enhanced cooperation to that end are indispensable for promoting better understanding across countries, cultures and civilizations.

The problems that the world is facing today are so numerous and compound that peace and security have become not only a military concept, but also an economic, social, development and multicultural one.

In December, Azerbaijan will complete its membership of the Security Council. It has been two years of outstanding experience and great collective work. I assure all Council members that Azerbaijan will further remain a reliable partner and genuine friend.

I shall now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I shall now give the floors to the members of the Security Council.

Ms. Bouaida (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank the delegation of Azerbaijan for having organized this debate on cooperation between the United Nations and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). We thank Secretaries-General Ban Ki-moon and Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu for their effective action in strengthening and giving renewed momentum to cooperation between their two organizations.

I also welcome Mr. Iyad bin Amin Madani, who will shortly become the new Secretary-General of the OIC.

Morocco is proud of having been the country chosen to host the headquarters of the OIC when it was established 44 years ago. Since then, Morocco has worked tirelessly to strengthen the organization and to ensure that it became a tool for cooperation and dialogue that would strengthen the synergy of Islamic cooperation. We are gratified to see cooperation between our two organizations, pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, and the coordination of their activities in addressing common threats and challenges.

We welcome the fact that the two organizations are implementing the commitments determined and defined at the OIC-United Nations general meeting held in Geneva from 1 to 3 May 2012. Both organizations are working to strengthen peace and security in Somalia, Afghanistan and the Sudan. The OIC maintains offices in Mogadishu and Kabul in support of the work of the United Nations. We also support the dialogue between the Government of the Sudan and the rebel movements in Darfur.

In the humanitarian sphere, and in the light of the problems in the Sahel, a joint mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and our organization is working to ease the suffering of the people of the region, especially in Mali. We support such cooperation, which must continue in order to assist Mali during the transition and reconstruction period launched following the elections and the restoration of peace and security in the country.

The vision of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, following the inauguration of His Excellency President Keita, aims at strengthening peace and security and Mali's territorial integrity and is a reflection of the King's wish to strengthen peace and security. Following orders given by His Highness, a local hospital was set up and 500 imams were sent from Morocco, in line with the fraternal relations of mutual assistance that have always existed between our two people.

Palestine is of critical importance to the OIC. It is the very *raison d'être* for the establishment of the organization. The OIC has always supported the cause of the Palestinian people in various ways. In that regard, cooperation is essential and of primary importance in the different areas in which we work, including the mechanisms for cooperation between the two organizations, both aimed at a lasting, fair and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue.

I welcome the efforts of the Administration of the United States, especially of Secretary of State Kerry, aimed at resuming direct negotiations. We hope those negotiations will lead to a two-State solution, with the Palestinians creating an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Within the framework of those efforts, the OIC has continued its assistance to the Palestinian people, including through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the assistance provided for new construction in Gaza through the Al-Quds Committee, chaired by His Highness King Mohammed VI, as part of concrete efforts carried out with Al-Quds funds.

We cherish the hope of seeing a common partnership between our two organizations, based on a long-term perspective of strategic cooperation that takes into account all the needs of our two Organizations and the complementarity between them. The OIC also needs support to ensure that we are in a position to act in areas where we have easier access than others. That should take place in a similar manner to its cooperation with other regional organizations. It should be done to expand the field of cooperation, and therefore achieve a greater level of cooperation through annual discussions and debates.

We urge both organizations to strengthen dialogue among civilizations and to act with respect for cultural and religious diversity. International peace and security hinge on such respect, which helps to prevent conflicts, extremism, religious hatred and other types of discrimination. The Kingdom of Morocco, which is wedded to that concept of dialogue, stands ready to support such cooperation among all peoples of the planet and to work against narrow-minded ideas in a firm and clear way.

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to congratulate and thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. We are particularly pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over this informative meeting and I take this opportunity to acknowledge the leadership of your country at the head of the Security Council.

I want to also extend my appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and to the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Mr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, for their briefings. They have both provided important contributions in assessing

the ongoing cooperation between the two organizations and how to continue strengthening it.

Finally, we recognize the presence of the Secretary-General-elect of the OIC, Mr. Iyad Madani, and the Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco, Ms. M'Barka Bouaida.

The role of regional organizations is key today in an international system that has evolved since the creation of the United Nations from an Organization comprising 51 countries to one with 193 countries. It is therefore not surprising that the weight of and the differences between different regional realities are reflected in the creation and increasing participation of new organizations. In that sense, the focus on integration is an effective way to build regional consensus in this globalized world.

On 6 August, during the Argentina's presidency of the Security Council, we addressed the issue of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security (see S/PV.7015). We agreed to ask the Secretary-General to include recommendations on ways to strengthen such cooperation in his next biennial report to the Security Council and the General Assembly.

That opportunity allowed us to share recent developments in different regions of the world. In the context of Latin America and the Caribbean, the pro tempore Chair of the Union of South American Nations clearly illustrated the constructive willingness of South American societies, which is reflected in the primary role that the young organization assumed in successfully carrying out various mediation exercises, enabling the peaceful resolution of disputes that have arisen between our peoples as a result of circumstance. We were also able to hear the President pro tempore of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States expound upon his work to reach a solution to one of the most serious bilateral crises in recent years in Latin America and the Caribbean.

It became clear that each regional or subregional organization had its own level of development and reflected different realities and needs. We therefore consider it important that the United Nations establish the forms and extent of cooperation with each of those regional organizations in accordance with that diversity.

In that regard, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which has members on four continents, is

destined to have a major role in the peaceful settlement of disputes. That is clear in the developments in recent years with regard to peace and safety, as reflected in the 10-year programme of action through 2015 adopted by the Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference in 2005 and the new Charter of the organization in 2008. It is also clear that the organization of Islamic Cooperation can play a role as facilitator in promoting the peace process in the Middle East, so that the parties and the countries of the region can reach the ultimate goal of establishing a just and lasting peace — the goal long sought by the international community.

Therefore, as expressed in resolution 67/264, adopted by consensus in the General Assembly and by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, we strongly support the continuing cooperation between those bodies with the common goal of seeking solutions to global problems. This includes areas such as disarmament, self-determination, the promotion of a culture of peace through dialogue and cooperation, decolonization, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the fight against international terrorism, capacity-building, the fight against pandemics and endemic diseases, environmental protection, climate change, emergency relief and rehabilitation, and technical cooperation.

The President of my country, Mrs. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, stated at that same meeting of 6 August that peace and security are not simply a military concept. There are many examples throughout the history of humankind that assure us that what really builds societies and builds stability are the values and ideals that a society and its millions of global partners uphold. We understand that these values are shared by all. Therefore, strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and the other entities of the United Nations system and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and its organs and institutions contributes to promoting the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Therefore we call on the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to strengthen the cooperative ties and channels between them and with other regional organizations.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): I wish to start by thanking His Excellency Mr. Elmar Maharram oglu Mammadyarov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan and President of the Security Council today, for the initiative to hold this debate. I congratulate him for the presidential statement that was just adopted

(S/PRST/2013/16). I would like to also thank His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General, and His Excellency Mr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), for their respective presentations.

As previously stated in the Council, debates of this nature present opportunities to reflect on ways of reinforcing cooperation in areas of common interest between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in relation to the maintenance of international peace and security. In accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations has recognized the need to work together with regional organizations for reasons such as geographic proximity, expediency and burden-sharing. It is now a fact that partnerships with regional and subregional organizations have been leading to positive outcomes in the maintenance of peace and security, given the advantage of local knowledge, proximity and the capability to mobilize and respond quickly. We believe that the OIC should also be understood in this context.

At its thirty-eighth ministerial meeting, held in Astana in July 2011, the OIC — which, I recall, is a viable organization with 57 member States, representing 1.6 billion Muslims around the world — reflected on its intention to engage more seriously with the growing number of international stakeholders, including in its growing role in conflict prevention and the promotion of dialogue and tolerance.

The OIC has a track record of mediation and peacekeeping in conflict zones. We recognize its efforts, in partnership with the United Nations and other regional and subregional organizations, to restore peace and security in Somalia, Afghanistan, the Sudan and the Middle East. We also commend its member States that are already contributing troops to peacekeeping missions in Africa and around the world and recall that half of the ten top United Nations troop- and police-contributing countries are members of the OIC.

Despite those significant developments, however, and as is the case with most other regional organizations, the cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC has yet to reach its full potential. That cooperation should therefore be substantially streamlined, mainly in the areas of mediating and resolving international conflicts. We believe that the OIC can do more. Indeed, building partnerships with other international

organizations such as the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and reforming its process through capacity-building and other means will improve its ability to contribute to the resolution of the seemingly intractable conflicts that are affecting the Middle East, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as to the fight against terrorism and the promotion of intercultural and religious dialogue around the world.

We believe that the OIC has special expertise with which it can tackle the cultural components that have always been driving factors of conflict in its member States. Those cultural and linguistic skills are invaluable in conducting knowledge-based and culturally sensitive mediation. The OIC's cultural competency gives it access to specific conflict zones that would have otherwise remained unreachable to other organizations, including the United Nations.

For instance, in Somalia, due to its rigorous understanding of local Somali culture, the OIC was allowed by Al-Shabaab to intervene in the delivery of humanitarian assistance in their areas of control. That comparative advantage could be used in other complex situations, including in Syria. It is therefore important that the United Nations maintain this partnership with the OIC, not only to strengthen cooperation in areas of mutual interest, but also to keep open channels of communication in difficult areas where the United Nations and other, regional organizations do not enjoy full access.

Of the 57 OIC member States, 27 are members of the African Union, 22 are members of the League of Arab States and 7 are members of both the African Union and the League of Arab States. That is why we make the call for the OIC to partner with other regional organizations in order to enhance coordination and avoid duplication of efforts. It is only through synergies between all those organizations that the OIC will have greater potential to achieve success in the maintenance of peace and security in our regions.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having taken the initiative to convene, during Azerbaijan's presidency of the Security Council, this first informational meeting on the partnership between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). I also thank the Secretary-General

of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the OIC, Mr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, for their statements, which have so well illustrated the links that are developing between the United Nations and the OIC. I also welcome the presence among us of the Secretary-General-elect of the OIC, Mr. Madani.

Luxembourg recognizes the contribution of the OIC and its member States to the activities and objectives of the United Nations. Regional and subregional organizations have an important role to play in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations is thus not only desirable, but also necessary. The meeting held in Geneva in May 2012 between the secretariats of the United Nations and the OIC showed the great potential that exists for cooperation in many areas of common interest, including conflict prevention and mediation, human rights, humanitarian assistance, intercultural dialogue and the fight against terrorism. It is undeniable that the activities of the OIC and its members in support of the goals of the United Nations are crucial in many crisis areas around the world, whether in Afghanistan, the Sahel, Somalia, Syria or in Yemen.

In the field of preventive diplomacy, we encourage the OIC to continue and step up its practical cooperation with the United Nations, especially in supporting Department of Political Affairs mediation teams.

In the area of conflict resolution, it is important for the OIC and its member States to remain fully committed to promoting a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while direct negotiations between the parties aimed at reaching the two-State solution were resumed this summer under the decisive leadership of the United States.

In the area of post-conflict peacebuilding, the contribution of the OIC and its member States is also appreciated, especially as religious authorities often play a leading role in national reconciliation. I have experienced that first-hand in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. Following my field visits and exchanges of views with religious leaders in the country, I am convinced that cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC could only benefit peacebuilding and national reconciliation in Guinea. Moreover, we note

with interest the intention of the Republic of Guinea to host the fortieth session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, from 9 to 11 December in Conakry.

Finally, in the field of humanitarian assistance, we welcome the cooperation that has been developed in recent years between the OIC and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The OIC and its member States show their solidarity by providing assistance to the Palestinian and Somali peoples. They are also coming to the aid of war-affected populations in Syria and, by extension, in the neighbouring countries of Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq. Last Friday, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Valerie Amos, asked the Security Council to put the greatest possible pressure on the parties to the conflict in Syria to promptly facilitate free and unhindered humanitarian access to those populations affected, especially to the civilians trapped for months in besieged towns in Syria (see S/PV.7049). As winter approaches, all parties, especially the Syrian authorities, must give effect to the provisions of the presidential statement adopted by the Security Council on 2 October (S/PRST/2013/15). In that context, we count on the active support of OIC and its member States. In parallel, we must work together to achieve a political solution in Syria through a political transition based on the full implementation of the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 (S/2012/522, annex).

In conclusion, I would like to thank your delegation, Mr. President, for having prepared the presidential statement adopted today (PRST/2013/16). We look forward to receiving the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his next report with regard to strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC in the interest of maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I would like to thank you, Sir, for having convened this debate, for your presence here today and for Azerbaijan's strong leadership of the Council this month.

I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. I also thank Mr. İhsanoğlu and welcome him to the Council, not for the first time, but as the first Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to brief us under this important agenda item. The OIC makes a valued contribution to fostering international peace and security, as its own Charter mandates. Today's presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/16)

rightly encourages the benefits of deeper cooperation between the Council and the OIC.

Australia recognizes the OIC's particular role in adopting with the Organization last year a cooperation agreement to underpin our own closer engagement, including on political and humanitarian issues. As we know, the partnership between the United Nations and international and regional organizations is a crucial instrument in our collective efforts to maintain peace and security, and, as Mr. İhsanoğlu notes, many of the issues on the Council's agenda relate to the Muslim world.

The OIC has unique strengths and distinct comparative advantages in different regions, born of its deep knowledge of context, cultural understanding and moral authority. The United Nations can and should draw upon those to help shape responses to threats to peace and security. We see those strengths manifestly through the very substantial contribution of OIC member States to United Nations peacekeeping operations. It is also evident in the OIC's invaluable mediation efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, the Philippines and Thailand. The OIC's newly established peace, security and mediation unit offers new opportunities for cooperation on the peaceful settlement of disputes, the prevention of relapse into conflict and on conflict-resolution initiatives, which we should fully embrace.

We acknowledge and welcome the OIC's growing role in responding to humanitarian crises, from drought in the Horn of Africa to floods in South Asia. The OIC's humanitarian work is also demonstrated by its rehabilitation programmes in the Palestinian territories and reconstruction efforts in Darfur. In Somalia and Yemen, the OIC has negotiated better access for humanitarian actors. We also welcome the forthcoming visit by the OIC to Myanmar to examine ways to help meet humanitarian needs and Muslim community needs there.

The joint needs assessment conducted by the OIC and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Syria, which culminated in a comprehensive humanitarian response plan, was important, and Australia was pleased to support OCHA's provision of technical training to the OIC's department of humanitarian affairs and its non-governmental organization partners to participate in coordinated international humanitarian efforts. I note Mr. İhsanoğlu's comment this morning on the OIC's concerted campaign against polio and I have to

note that polio has now resurfaced in Syria for the first time in 14 years.

My own country shares the OIC's deep concern about the conflict in Syria, which has precipitated an enormous humanitarian crisis and is destabilizing neighbouring countries in the Middle East region. We agree that the Council could and should do more to protect civilians caught up in the fighting and to ensure humanitarian access and assistance.

Australia fully supports the OIC's call for an immediate cessation of violence and a process of peaceful transition through the "Geneva II" process. We also agree with the OIC that the current peace negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel are an opportunity to achieve the two-State solution that we must not miss.

Australia welcomes the OIC's efforts along with the United Nations to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of tolerance and peace, and we were pleased to sponsor the OIC-supported General Assembly resolution 67/178, on combatting intolerance due to religion or belief. We strongly support enhanced cooperation to improve understanding across countries and cultures, as evidenced by Australia's role in co-chairing over the past decade the regional interfaith dialogue in Southeast Asia with our close partner and OIC member Indonesia.

We look forward to examining the practical recommendations to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC in the next report of the Secretary-General. Our focus should be in areas where the United Nations and the OIC share common objectives and complementarities: mediation, conflict-prevention and -resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the incoming Secretary-General, Mr. Madani, and to pay tribute in particular to Mr. İhsanoğlu for his vision in leading the OIC over the past nine years and for enhancing the partnership with the United Nations. He leaves behind an important legacy for us to build on.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): We are pleased to see you preside over this meeting, Sir. Pakistan appreciates Azerbaijan's initiative to hold this debate on ways to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). We thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and OIC Secretary-General Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu for their participation and briefings today. I would also like to

thank the Secretary-General and the Security Council for reaching out to the OIC to forge strong partnerships.

We pay tribute to Mr. İhsanoğlu who, on his watch, has moved the OIC to a higher plane of performance and engagement. He has made the OIC a mainstream international organization focusing on issues of peace and security, human rights, economic development, education and scientific and technological exchange.

With 57 Member States in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America with a combined population of 1.6 billion, the OIC is the second-largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations. Most significantly, the 2008 OIC Charter enshrines the purposes of international peace and security and understanding and dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions. Because of the vast geographical expanse of the OIC, which straddles many regions and subregions, it is only natural that the OIC and the United Nations should collaborate closely for the realization of the purposes and principles set forth in the United Nations Charter. Both organizations have cooperated productively to advance their shared agenda on preventive diplomacy, mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, human rights, humanitarian assistance and refugees, counterterrorism and promotion of tolerance, peace and intercultural dialogue.

The OIC itself is a natural partner and interlocutor for the United Nations and the Security Council. It works closely with the League of Arab States, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Economic Cooperation Organization and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, all of which are partners of the United Nations. It networks successfully with the African Union, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on a host of issues, including conflict resolution, human rights and mediation.

Many issues on the Council's agenda relate to the States members of the OIC. Millions in OIC countries continue to live in conflict and post-conflict situations or under foreign occupation and alien domination. Those conflicts and injustices pose a grave threat to international peace and security and impede socioeconomic development in affected countries and regions.

The OIC has lent a helping hand by contributing to the various mediation, humanitarian, peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts in the Sudan, Somalia, Sierra Leone and Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is working with

the United Nations for the promotion of sustainable peace and stability in Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar, Libya, Somalia and Mali.

We thank the OIC for adopting year after year resolutions on the realization of the right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It has established a contact group on Jammu and Kashmir, appointed a special representative and called for a ceasefire along the line of control.

The countries of the OIC, including Pakistan, constitute the bulk and backbone of the United Nations peacekeeping endeavour. In future, the Security Council and the OIC need to work energetically and cohesively on six issues.

First, the threat of terrorism has manifoldly increased. It has now become much more amorphous and lethal. We agree with the Secretary-General that no culture or religion should be associated with terrorism or extremism. Terrorism is now inspired and driven by primeval brutality and extremism. It is an existential threat to our zeitgeist. The OIC and the United Nations can work to eliminate the menace through a combination of deterrence, dialogue and development. It is equally important to address root causes and alleviate deprivation and exclusion.

Secondly, in collaboration with the United Nations and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, the OIC should explore political tools, legal means and cultural metaphors to address the tension between incitement to hatred and violence and freedom of thought and expression. We all need a harmonious world, for us and for future generations.

Thirdly, a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East is at the heart of the OIC-United Nations agenda. There is a deep sense of disappointment among the OIC countries and others at the inability of the Security Council to implement its own resolutions that have been crafted to provide the framework for a lasting solution in the Middle East. Now that there is renewed engagement between Palestine and Israel for a two-State solution, the OIC should use its clout and standing to help the Quartet and the United States resolve that long-standing issue. If the issue of Palestine gets resolved, we will all be living in a different, better world.

Fourthly, within the OIC, there are influential countries that can use their proven leverage to prod and persuade the Syrian Government and the opposition

to move to the negotiating table in Geneva to find a diplomatic formula for national reconciliation and transition that is acceptable to the Syrian people. In fact, a formula already exists; the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 has all the essential ingredients for a solution.

Fifthly, the Secretary-General and the Security Council should involve the OIC more closely in the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa on the issues of asymmetric warfare and terrorism. The OIC's competencies for mediation can help in moving those regions towards conflict resolution and political stabilization.

Sixthly, there should be a closer interface between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on social, economic, human rights and environmental issues. In the coming years, as the United Nations fashions its post-2015 development agenda, it should work with the OIC and, through it, with its members, for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of the sustainable development goals as soon as they are designed.

We are confident that the incoming Secretary-General of the OIC, Mr. Iyad Madani, whom we welcome here today, will build on the excellent work done over the years by Secretary-General Ihsanoglu.

Finally, I would like to say to the wider audience that the OIC as an organization has come of age. Its importance should not be underrated.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, we thank you for convening today's ministerial briefing to discuss cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), as well as the concept paper circulated by your delegation (S/2013/588). We also appreciate your presence among us here today, Sir.

Allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his statement, in which he gave us a broad vision of the cooperation established between the two organizations. Similarly, we express our appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for the information presented to us on the affinities of the work of that organization and of the Security Council in the general area of conflict prevention, including mediation. We congratulate him on his constructive management at the head of the organization.

We come from a country and a subregion that greatly value intraregional cooperation. Our delegation has therefore always supported the Security Council partnerships cited in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The core of such partnerships is founded on the comparative advantages that each party brings to the arrangement. The Security Council represents the highest level of multilateral diplomacy working to ensure international peace and security. The regional and subregional organizations, for their part, are more intimately acquainted with the countries they are made up of, which makes them strategic partners in conflict prevention.

The peculiarity of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is that it is not a regional organization, since its ranks include countries from various parts of the world whose common bond lies in a vision and values that are shared among its partners. It has already accumulated valuable experience in cooperating since 1969 with the United Nations throughout our Organization's various incarnations as an institution, chiefly through the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as in the area of humanitarian assistance.

We commend its performance in recent years and at various levels in the areas of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and combating terrorism. Its active participation in situations such as those in Somalia, Afghanistan, Mali, Myanmar and Darfur are proof of its invaluable work in pursuit of peace as a noble ideal, sharing the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We trust that those efforts can also contribute to finding a solution to the conflicts in the Middle East, which is the founding reason for the existence of this Organization.

We believe there is always room to improve the relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, so that regardless of differences of opinion, the spirit whereby this mechanism was included in the Charter of the United Nations is not lost. In that context, we feel it is important to remember that when it comes to conflict prevention, we should prioritize partnerships with those regional and subregional organizations that can rely on a mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security and that can be identified as crucial stakeholders in conflict resolution. There is no doubt that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation falls into that category.

Finally, from our national perspective as a multicultural nation, we recognize the valuable and pertinent role that the OIC has played in helping to promote respect and intercultural dialogue, within the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations of the United Nations, in order to combat religious intolerance. Its worthy contribution is in step with respect for human rights, which is a high priority of our own foreign policy.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for your presence here today and for bringing us together on such a timely topic. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his thoughtful remarks.

It is a particular pleasure to have Secretary-General İhsanoğlu join us. I commend his pioneering leadership, including the 10-year programme of action that has modernized the activities of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), bringing them from primarily political and economic issues to those concerning human rights, science and innovation. I am also pleased to greet Secretary-General-elect Madani and congratulate him on his election.

It is entirely fitting that the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the world's two largest intergovernmental organizations, should consult often and work together whenever possible. The United States values the many contributions the OIC is making on matters of global importance, and appreciates the chance to discuss the prospects for even deeper cooperation. I note at the outset that OIC members are among the top troop-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping missions, and that they are playing a critical part in promoting international peace and security in many areas of conflict.

The OIC also provides humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, Somalia and the Sahel region, as well as other areas in urgent need. In doing so, it reinforces the work of many United Nations agencies and helps to address concerns that are priorities on the Council's agenda. Last year, in recognition of the central role played by the OIC as a representative forum for more than 1.5 billion people, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) signed an agreement with the OIC designed to increase cooperation on such humanitarian issues as famine in the Horn of Africa. In responding to emergency situations, coordination is essential, and so is a broad

network of support. We hope to continue building on the OIC-USAID partnership in years to come.

We also recognize the OIC's creation of an independent human rights commission, and its attention to child marriage, gender-related issues and other pressing human-rights concerns within OIC member States. In the work of the Security Council, we have noted our appreciation for the OIC's effort to foster a deeper sense of trust and cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours, regional partners and international organizations. We have also urged the authorities in Mali to work closely with the OIC, as well as with the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union, in order to enhance that country's capacity for effective mediation. And on Somalia, we have commended the OIC for its keen interest and steadfast backing for reconciliation and recovery.

The United States also recognizes that the OIC has become a strong and respected voice in the international community's collective effort to counter violent extremism, which has caused suffering and strife on every continent. We particularly commend Secretary General Ihsanoglu for speaking out firmly against attacks on religious minorities and denouncing acts of terrorism. I note that the OIC recently co-hosted, with the Council's Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning Counter-Terrorism, a meeting on implementing resolution 1624 (2005), which is designed to curb actions that fuel hate and incite terror.

No issue has been of greater concern to the Council in the last few years than the ongoing crisis in Syria. My Government welcomes the joint Arab League-OIC statement expressing support for a "Geneva II" conference and a peaceful solution to the crisis based on the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 (S/2012/523, annex). It is in keeping with the Council's own position, as reflected in resolution 2118 (2013). We also appreciate the Secretary General's strong and timely condemnation of the chemical weapons attack in Syria on 21 August. More recent statements have endorsed the international plan to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons programme and have called for accountability for those responsible for the use of such arms. I would also like to highlight the OIC's continuing campaign to increase international contributions aimed at meeting the immense humanitarian needs resulting from the Syrian civil war. Those needs are growing at

an exponential rate, and my Government encourages all to increase support for United Nations humanitarian appeals.

Turning to Middle East peace efforts, I note that in Cairo in February the OIC reiterated its support for a just, peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is significant that the OIC, with its 57 members, has endorsed the Arab Peace Initiative as the basis of Middle East negotiations. The support of the Islamic world for a comprehensive and negotiated peace can be a vital contributor to the successful outcome of talks between the parties. We interpret that support as recognition that everyone in the region and beyond has a stake in seeing that the negotiations go forward in a positive and productive manner.

In conclusion, I note that the relationship between the United Nations and the OIC is unique, not only because of the OIC's size and reach but because the OIC is an organization centred around one of the world's largest religious faiths. The United States welcomes the perspective of the OIC as a distinctive and leading voice in the Muslim world, and looks forward to continuing to work together, and with the Security Council as appropriate, to address challenges to international peace and security.

Mr. Sul Kyung-hoon (Republic of Korea): I thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Secretary-General Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu for their informative briefings. I also appreciate Azerbaijan's initiative in organizing today's meeting. The growing complexity and multifaceted nature of recent conflicts highlights the need for more vigorous and coordinated cooperation and interaction between the Security Council and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation(OIC).

Many countries, from the Maghreb to the Levant, now face daunting nation-building challenges following the so-called Arab Spring. Social contracts may yet emerge in many countries, but we are worried to see that fundamentalism and extremism tend to fill the vacuums created by political turmoil and transition. Therefore, reaffirming genuine Islamic peace and stability has become a significant task central to our pursuit of international peace and security, human rights and development. The fulfilment of that task undoubtedly will serve global interests. We also believe that this can be most effectively undertaken by the OIC in close cooperation with the international community. In the same vein, we believe that it is very timely for us to take stock of the progress made in the cooperation

between the two organizations and to exchange views on the way forward.

Since the OIC adopted its new Charter, in 2008, it has worked closely with the United Nations in restoring peace and security in various regions — inter alia, Afghanistan, Somalia and Darfur. We commend the OIC office of humanitarian affairs in Somalia for helping those in need of humanitarian assistance. The International Contact Group on Afghanistan meeting, held in Jeddah in 2011, highlighted the essential role of the OIC and its member States in the process of Afghanistan's transition into a stable, democratic and prosperous country. On the Sudan, we commend the support of the OIC financial institutions in helping the country to overcome its economic difficulties.

Combating terrorism is another important area in which the OIC contributes to the work of the United Nations. While we commend the joint efforts thus far, we hope that the close cooperation between the OIC and United Nations organizations will be further strengthened in diverse areas. In that regard, the biennial joint meeting between the Secretariat and the OIC provides a good opportunity to fine-tune coordination and cooperation at the institutional level. In that respect, we underscore the utility of the matrix of activities within the framework of United Nations-OIC collaboration, adopted in May 2012. We look forward to the report on more concrete activities to be presented at the next general meeting, in 2014.

In steering the way forward for closer cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC, certainly Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations should be a guide post. At the same time, I would like to mention the recommendations made by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his previous reports under the agenda item "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations."

First, the respective roles of the United Nations and the OIC should be further elaborated with regard to the scope of cooperation between the two organizations.

Secondly, cooperation between the two organizations should be further encouraged on the basis of the guidelines established through previous high-level meetings of the Security Council. Those include the primary responsibility of the Council in international peace and security, and the need for consistency and impartiality on the part of the United Nations and its partner organizations.

Thirdly, it would be very useful if the OIC clarified its own comparative advantage, not just vis-à-vis the United Nations but also alongside other relevant regional and subregional organizations. For instance, we believe that the OIC could play a distinctive role in promoting dialogue among civilizations. As the OIC 10-year programme of action stresses, intercivilizational dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding and equality among peoples is a prerequisite for international peace and security. We are confident that the OIC can make valuable contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security by building on its areas of strength.

Lastly, I join others in thanking Azerbaijan for drafting the presidential statement just adopted (S/PRST/2013/16).

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I welcome you, Mr. President, to the Security Council this morning. I would also like to thank the presidency of Azerbaijan for organizing this timely briefing on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). I also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and OIC Secretary-General Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu for their contributions. I note that, last year, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon became the first United Nations Secretary-General to visit the OIC headquarters. His presence at the start of today's debate was another reflection of his strong commitment to ensuring that the United Nations and the OIC cooperate closely.

The United Kingdom, too, is deeply committed to further strengthening our relationship with the OIC. In 2011, we were pleased to appoint our first special representative to the OIC. We welcome the increased dialogue between the United Kingdom and the OIC under the tenure of Mr. İhsanoğlu, including our constructive dialogue on promoting the freedom of religion or belief and combating religious intolerance throughout the world. We are committed to deepening that relationship under the bilateral framework agreement that was signed between the United Kingdom and the OIC in 2012.

These meetings in which the Security Council engages with regional and other outside organizations are a vital part of our work. They enable the Council to be outward-facing, to hear the important perspectives of non-United Nations organizations and to identify ways in which our efforts to enhance peace and security

throughout the world can mutually reinforce each other. It is in that spirit that I welcome today's briefing.

The OIC, consisting of 57 member States across four different continents, has a unique perspective to offer us. Its Charter, which stresses the determination of its member States to contribute to international peace and security and to promote friendly relations and good-neighbourliness, clearly chimes with the purposes and objectives of the Security Council. The OIC can play an important role in bringing the voices of its membership to bear on issues that concern us all, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The adoption of the OIC's 10-year programme of action in 2005 has given a clear sense of direction for the organization. And we commend the OIC's commitment to peacekeeping and conflict resolution.

We also acknowledge the important stance that the OIC has taken in relation to the challenges in respect of international peace and security faced by many Muslim majority countries. The suspension of Syria's membership of the OIC in August 2012 sent a clear message on behalf of the Islamic world that the actions of Bashar Al-Assad's Government were unacceptable and could not be tolerated. In the build-up to the "Geneva II" conference and at the start of talks between the Syrian opposition and the Syrian Government, we welcome the OIC's support for a negotiated political settlement. A solution to the Syrian conflict can be achieved only through a political dialogue. For the sake of the millions suffering as a result of the conflict, the international community must keep striving towards that aim.

Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains crucial to long-term security in the Middle East. We welcome the leadership shown by the United States on the issue, and the parties' commitment to intensify negotiations in the coming weeks. Difficult choices lie ahead and bold leadership will be required on both sides. The international community has a vital role to play in supporting those efforts to achieve the lasting peace that the people of the region need and deserve.

As his tenure comes to an end, we pay tribute to the work of Mr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary-General of the OIC. We look forward to working with his successor, Mr. Iyad Madani, when he takes office in 2014. We are delighted that he has been able to join the Council today for the briefing and are confident that cooperation between the OIC and the Security Council

will continue to strengthen during his future term in office.

Let me end by welcoming the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/16) adopted by the Council today. That statement invites the Secretary-General to include in his regular reports on United Nations cooperation with regional and other organizations ideas on how cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC can be intensified. We look forward to receiving those suggestions.

Mr. M'Beou (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank the Azerbaijani delegation, and you in particular, Mr. President, for organizing this debate on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which has facilitated the Council's consideration, for the first time, of the issue of cooperation between the two institutions in terms of the Council's work. I thank the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the OIC for their respective briefings. I especially congratulate Mr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, whose mandate will soon expire, for his leading role as head of the OIC in promoting Islamic principles of solidarity, tolerance and moderation. Similarly, I congratulate Mr. Iyad Madani on his election as Secretary-General of the OIC. We are confident that under his leadership the organization will continue to make a valuable contribution to building a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Today's world is witnessing political upheavals in Africa and the Middle East taking place within and around the Muslim world that call for intensified efforts among regional organizations and the United Nations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Togo welcomes the OIC's active role in speaking on behalf of the Muslim world in international efforts, including United Nations efforts to resolve such conflicts and crises. In that respect, we especially recall OIC initiatives including the appointment of a special envoy for Mali and the Sahel, mediation efforts to facilitate negotiations among the armed movements in Darfur and the Sudan, the OIC's support for the high-level efforts on inter-Afghan relations and its support for a political solution to the Syrian crisis. With respect to those conflicts, the OIC has participated as a strategic partner of the United Nations in seeking solutions and ensuring support for humanitarian issues.

My country urges the OIC to further its constructive role through greater investment in conflict-prevention efforts. In that respect, it is crucial that the OIC further strengthen internal unity and solidarity to end the rivalries between some of its member States, which threaten the achievement of negotiated solutions to conflicts in those countries. In the same vein, we welcome the establishment, on 20 March, of a peace, security and mediation unit under the auspices of the OIC Secretary-General in Jeddah, as well as the close cooperation established with the United Nations Mediation Support Unit. We believe that the unit's establishment will strengthen the OIC's role and capacity in using mediation as a tool in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

Moreover, while welcoming the establishment in 2011 of the OIC Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights, Togo calls on the OIC to urge its States members to rapidly implement its 10-year programme of action, in particular as it pertains to good governance and the promotion of human rights in the Muslim world, especially the rights of women and children. Those measures will contribute to reducing factors leading to crises within the Muslim world and its individual States.

Increasing intolerance and discrimination due to religious belief or conviction today seriously threaten global peace and security. In that context, Togo urges the United Nations, the OIC and the entire international community to pursue, through consensus rather than confrontation, efforts under way to facilitate the coexistence of principles valued by our States — freedom of expression and combating all forms of religious discrimination and intolerance. In that context, Togo particularly welcomes the work of the Istanbul Process as well as the interfaith dialogue and cooperation efforts of the General Assembly.

Nevertheless, the evolution in recent years within States members of the OIC — particularly African States — of the terrorism phenomenon remains a source of great concern. Criminal groups are threatening the stability in Africa in the name of religion and are expanding their areas of operations to sow further terror. In that regard, further strengthening and support of the dynamic cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC in the fight against that scourge is crucial in order to ensure strengthened capabilities of OIC member States to face the threat. However, it is important that the response to the phenomenon not

remain confined to the area of security alone, but that it takes into account the development dimension in affected areas and ensure good governance and respect for human rights.

Many areas of cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC require development and further strengthening commensurate with the significant challenges to international peace and security. The facilitation of a political process capable of ending conflicts, especially in Syria, should become a priority. We therefore urge both institutions to continue to interact and share their experiences. In that regard, it is my delegation's belief that progressive implementation of the framework adopted in Geneva in 2012, and identifying the areas of cooperation planned between the United Nations and the OIC, should become the priority approach of focused efforts.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for organizing this debate to allow the Council to consider an issue that is dear to my country, namely, the contributions of regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security and promoting rule of law. I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I welcome the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in his first opportunity to speak before the Council. I congratulate him on his dynamic efforts, which have led to profound changes in the OIC. We look forward to soon working with his predecessor, Mr. Iyad Madani, whom we welcome and wish every success in carrying out his functions in future.

France has strengthened its relations with the OIC. We have appointed a special envoy to the organization and we hold regular political consultations on issues of common interest such as the Syrian crisis, the Middle East peace process, the Arab Spring, Mali and the fight against international terrorism. We have also decided to deepen our exchanges on human rights.

We welcome the adoption by the OIC of the 10-year programme of action to meet the challenges facing the Muslim Ummah in the twenty-first century. While the Arab and Muslim world faces major crises, dialogue between the United Nations and the OIC on topics such as conflict prevention and mediation, human rights, humanitarian assistance and refugees, the fight against terrorism and intercultural dialogue is essential. It must be strengthened.

I should like to underscore several aspects of the OIC's contribution to the achievement of the United Nations objectives.

First, I hail the courageous commitment of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in the Syrian conflict. Since the beginning of the Syrian tragedy, the OIC has tirelessly called on the Council to carry out its responsibilities to put an end to the bloodshed. The OIC has underscored that the primary responsibility for the ongoing violence, murders and slaughters lies with the Syrian Government. All that has led to the deaths of thousands of unarmed civilians. The OIC has condemned those massacres, perpetrated in cities and towns by the Syrian authorities. Given the intransigence of the Syrian regime and its persistent will to pursue a military solution to the crisis, the OIC leadership took the courageous decision to suspend Syria from the organization in August 2012.

The OIC has also held the Syrian Government fully responsible for chemical attacks against the Syrian people, which took place on 21 August in Ghouta, on the outskirts of Damascus. As Mr. İhsanoğlu indicated, the use of such arms in Syria should be considered a war crime and a crime against humanity. The perpetrators of that odious crime must be brought to justice. On Syria, we share the same objective: putting an end to this conflict through a political solution that will allow the Syrian people to achieve their aspirations for freedom and justice.

We also believe that the Middle East peace process is a central question. We very much hope that negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis will allow for a negotiated solution based on the coexistence of two States, Israel and Palestine, living in peace and security.

Furthermore, we appreciate the mediations efforts undertaken by the OIC through the good offices of its Secretary-General in Somalia, where the organization is an active member of the International Contact Group, as well as in Afghanistan. We would also like to hail the commitment of OIC member countries in the service of peacekeeping and peacebuilding through the contribution of military and police for peacekeeping operations.

As the Secretary-General has also underscored, the OIC is also an important partner for the United Nations in the humanitarian field. A memorandum of agreement and a plan of action was signed by the

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the OIC in 2011. The two organizations have worked closely in Somalia and the Philippines and more recently in Syria, where they conducted a joint assessment of humanitarian needs. In 2011 and 2012, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the OIC worked together to convene an international ministerial conference on refugees in the Muslim world.

I should also like to hail the commitment of the OIC in the fight against terrorism. As noted repeatedly by the Secretary-General of OIC, nothing justifies international terrorism. In the fight against terrorism and radical extremism, we all know that we enjoy the support of Muslims around the world who condemn those who distort or manipulate their religion.

The OIC is also a central interlocutor for the initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations. We are pleased that the United Nations and the OIC are committed to strengthening their dialogue to promote tolerance and peace. It is essential to protect and promote, everywhere, the freedom of religion or belief and the rights of individuals belonging to religious minorities.

With regard to human rights, we hope that the Permanent and Independent Commission for Human Rights that the OIC has created will effectively contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights for all those living in OIC member countries, with respect for the universal principles of human rights.

To conclude, I wish to emphasize that the partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations is a very topical matter. The severity and the number of conflicts around the world require calling up all available resources. This partnership must continue in line with the relevant principles and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, under the auspices of the Security Council. That is how we will ensure coherent international action, clarity in actions taken by the United Nations, and respect for the core values of our Organization.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates the initiative of Azerbaijan to host today's high-level briefing on strengthening the partnership and synergy between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). We welcome Foreign Minister Mammadyarov, who has presided over this meeting. I thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Mr Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu,

Secretary-General of the OIC; and Mr. Iyad Madani, the newly elected Secretary-General of the OIC, for their attendance. China has listened attentively to the briefings by Secretaries-General Ban Ki-moon and Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu.

China welcomes the presidential statement just adopted by the Council (S/PRST/2013/16).

The United Nations is the core of our collective security system, and the Security Council shoulders the primary responsibility for maintaining world peace and security. At the same time, various regional and subregional organizations are playing an ever more important role in maintaining regional peace and security and promoting development. They have become a useful complement to the United Nations.

At present, global and regional threats and challenges are on the rise, and national security interests are intertwined. Strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and various regional and subregional organizations is conducive to promoting multilateralism and solidifying and strengthening international collective security mechanisms and our common efforts to maintain international peace and security. China appreciates the important role played by the OIC in promoting unity and cooperation in the Islamic world and dialogues among different civilizations. China supports efforts to further deepen cooperation between the United Nations and this Council on the one hand, and the OIC on the other hand, in our common endeavour to promote world peace and economic development.

I wish to highlight the following three points.

First, the conduct of cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC should be guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic norms governing international relations. The purposes and principles of the Charter represent the cornerstone of contemporary international relations. The Charter is the guiding document for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. This cooperation should uphold fundamental principles such as those established in the Charter, namely, sovereign equality and the peaceful settlement of disputes. This should be designed to strengthen coordination in a united effort to solve regional hotspot issues through good offices and mediation and to maintain international and regional peace, security, stability and development.

Secondly, in conducting cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC, attention should be paid to the overall coordination with an eye on comparative advantages. Because of its advantages in terms of religion, history and culture, the OIC is uniquely placed to deal well with questions related to Islam. Over the past years, the OIC has played an important role, recognized by the international community, in assisting in the settlement of regional conflicts and bolstering post-conflict reconstruction. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council, on the one hand, and the OIC, on the other, should be built on coordination and relative advantages in order to complement each other's efforts and build synergy.

Thirdly, cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC can take a variety of forms while focusing on results. In May 2012, the Secretariat and the OIC reached an important consensus on strengthening cooperation in conflict prevention, mediation, humanitarian assistance and cross-cultural dialogues. In May, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the OIC held a seminar in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on international cooperation in fighting terrorism with positive results.

Such interaction has furthered cooperation exchange between the United Nations and the OIC in areas of mutual concern, while accumulating useful experiences for future cooperation. In keeping pace with evolving situations and actual needs, both parties would do well to further explore and expand channels of coordination and enrich the means and ways of cooperation to achieve better results.

China attaches top priority to the unique role of the OIC and supports its continuing, positive efforts to maintain regional peace and security and promote common development. Over time, China has actively developed friendly, cooperative relations with Islamic countries and has formed mutually supportive political partnerships, mutually beneficial economic partnerships, and humanistic partnerships built on exchanges and cooperation.

China stands ready to join with the international community in further elevating the cooperation between the Security Council and the OIC in our joint efforts to build a harmonious world of enduring peace and a common prosperity.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. Minister, we are pleased to welcome

you here to preside over the Council and pay tribute to your personal contribution to improving the working methods of the Council.

We thank the delegation of Azerbaijan for convening today's important meeting on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). We listened attentively to the statement made by the OIC Secretary-General, Mr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, which highlighted the OIC's work on many of issues that are also on the United Nations agenda and that, no less important, it is doing so in a similar direction.

Currently, issues relating to the maintenance of international peace and security make it increasingly necessary for the international community to turn to regional and subregional formats. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations states that the Council shall make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through regional arrangements.

At the same time, we note that in addition to a geographical commonality serving as an effective unifying factor, in many cases a common cultural history serves the same purpose. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation brings together countries whose peoples profess common spiritual and moral values. Such a unifying factor can and should play a crucial role in resolving the many complex tasks facing the world community. That applies first and foremost to the prevention of conflicts, mediation, and political and diplomatic settlement, where the potential of the OIC is greatly needed.

Today the Arab world is experiencing a period of turmoil, often accompanied by bloody conflicts behind which lurk deep-rooted differences in values. Preventing nations from sliding into the abyss of sectarian strife is not just the responsibility of the Council; it is also a common task in which the OIC, alongside regional and subregional organizations, is destined to play an irreplaceable role.

In a number of ways, the pooling of efforts in fighting terrorism will serve to test the mettle of both the Security Council and the OIC. Unfortunately, this global evil is often and mundanely associated in people's minds with Islamic extremism. We are convinced that terrorist actions, regardless of where, why and by whom they are committed, require unconditional

condemnation. Any form of support for such criminal activity must be resolutely confronted and resisted. Given the increasing threats posed by terrorism, particularly sectarian and ethnic violence, we must make especially strenuous efforts to counter the rising incidence of defamation of any particular religion.

Against that turbulent backdrop, promoting the ideas of peace, tolerance and non-violence; the dialogue of civilizations, cultures and religions; and universal moral values is more pressing than ever before in order to fully uphold human rights and freedoms. All this must harmoniously complement the principle of international law enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including non-interference in internal affairs, the territorial integrity of States, the inadmissibility of the use or threat of use of force.

Russia's relations with the OIC have been built on the basis of dialogue and mutual respect, and goes back two decades. It would be remiss of me not to recall that in 1993 I had the pleasure of being the first Russian official representative, in my capacity as Russian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, to visit OIC headquarters.

Our country, with its 20 million Muslims, is an observer at the OIC and is consistently developing cooperation with the organization's member States. Early this month, the OIC Secretary-General visited Moscow, where a framework agreement of cooperation was signed between the Federation Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Russia and the OIC secretariat. That important document serves as the principal road map for close cooperation on the entire scope of our shared agenda. Mr. İhsanoğlu also took part in the economic summit between Russia and the OIC in Kazan.

In conclusion, I would like to voice the hope that today's presidential statement on cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC (S/PRST/2013/16) will stimulate the further strengthening and development of cooperation between the two organizations and complement it with concrete practical steps of common interest.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

**Report on OICSG Participation in the High Level UNSC Meeting on
Strengthening UN-OIC Cooperation**

**UN - New York
28 October 2013**

In its capacity as President of the United Security Council for the month of October 2013, the Republic of Azerbaijan, arranged to hold a high level meeting of the Security Council on the topic 'Strengthening the Partnership Synergy between the UN and the OIC'.

02. The meeting was held on 28 October 2013 with the participation of H.E. the OICSG and UNSG along with all members of the Security Council. It is worth noting that the membership of the current Security Council includes four (4) OIC Member States, namely Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Morocco, and Togo.

03. Azerbaijan's Minister of Foreign Affairs inaugurated the meeting by delivering a statement in which he commended the genuine and tremendous efforts deployed by H.E. OICSG slated to boost the OIC stature and reinforce its cooperative partnership with the UN in manifold fields, particularly in the domain of peace-building, securitization, socio-economic development, and humanitarian assistance in the OIC Member States and in the larger world community.

04. The Azeri Minister expressed his view that the UNSC high-level meeting carries critical importance in the sense that it offered an unprecedented opportunity to review the current state of cooperation between the OIC and the UN and to explore ideas and measures likely to help enhance the partnership synergy between the two organizations towards a deeper cooperation in promoting peace and security.

05. The UNSC President submitted to the meeting the Presidency's statement made on behalf of the Council. The Statement underlined that the Security Council recognizes and further encourages the active contribution of the OIC to the work of the UN toward the realization of the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter. The Statement highlights the Security Council's request to the Secretary General to include in his biannual report to the Security Council and the General Assembly on Cooperation between the UN and regional and other organizations recommendations on ways to enhance cooperation between the UN and the OIC.

06. The UNSC President's Statement was adopted and considered as a UNSC binding document.

07. Mr. Ban Ki Moon delivered a statement in which he expressed his appreciation and thanks to the OICSG for his perceptive leadership and valuable services. He recalled that he was honored to be the first UNSG to visit the OIC headquarters last year, emphasizing his aspiration to see the two organizations build more substantially on their partnership in the years ahead.

08. Mr. Ban Ki Moon touched on a number of specific issues that reflect the significant cooperative work of the two organizations, like the crisis in Syria where the UN and the OIC have been in close consultation at both the political and humanitarian levels. As for the Middle

East Peace Process, the UNSG pointed out that both the UN and the OIC are endeavoring to mend existing rifts and rebuild confidence between Palestinians and Israelis. On Myanmar, the UNSG expressed his hope that an OIC delegation will soon visit that country where communal tensions are running high. He likewise welcomed the OIC constructive engagement to reduce tensions in Myanmar. He went on by expressing appreciation for the efforts of the OIC engagement with the Afghan crisis, the Malian crisis, and the Darfur crisis in Sudan. He also stressed that both the UN and the OIC should continue to deploy efforts toward making more tangible progress on issues that extend beyond regional boundaries, like terrorism, promotion of the rule of the law, intercultural dialogue and other such transnational issues. At the conclusion of his statement, the UNSG stated that the UN and the OIC must continue to deepen their strategic dialogue.

09. H.E. the OICSG delivered a very comprehensive statement in which he underlined that the fact that the Security Council had convened a high-level debate on UN-OIC cooperation reflects the importance both organizations attach to their mutual cooperation. He stressed on OIC's firm commitment to an active partnership with the UN in promoting peace, security, and development. He also emphasized the need to reform the UN Security Council.

10. H.E. the OICSG pointed to the preamble of the OIC Charter, which reaffirms the commitment of the OIC Member States to the Charter of the UN, and to the OIC Ten-Year Program of Action, which calls for strengthening activities in conflict prevention, confidence-building, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation in cooperation with international and regional organizations.

11. H.E. the OICSG highlighted the milestone decisions taken by the OIC to establish a peace, security, and mediation unit, a center for the development of women, and an independent permanent human rights commission, as well as an international cooperation and humanitarian affairs department. These steps, he emphasized, indicate the OIC's understanding of the importance of socio-economic development, human rights, and humanitarian assistance in promoting peace and security. As such the OIC has made invaluable contributions to the work of the UN in all these fields.

12. On another level, H.E. the OICSG reaffirmed that the international community and the Security Council in particular, bear special responsibility to solve the Palestinian question by striving toward establishing an independent and sovereign Palestinian State. At the same time, he reassured of the OIC's commitment to assisting the Palestinian people to improve their socio-economic conditions.

13. The OICSG's statement was endorsed as an official document of the Security Council.

14. All 14 members of the UNSC delivered statements of real substance in which they all shared many of the points raised in the statements of the UNSG and the OICSG. They particularly commended the leadership of the OICSG which gave a qualitative boost to the activities and the role of the OIC in regional and international arenas. The US PR described the OICSG's leadership as pioneering. The French PR characterized it as dynamic while the British PR qualified it as valuable.

15. In their respective statements, all 14 UNSC members expressed their support for cooperation between the UN and the OIC, calling for closer collaboration. The Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Morocco who headed the Moroccan delegation called for fostering the UN-OIC cooperation into a strategic visionary cooperation which should take the form of an annual bilateral dialogue.

16. All 14 UNSC members mentioned that the OIC enjoys a huge potential and possesses manifold comparative advantages and cultural skills which could certainly enable it to play an instrumental and constructive role on the international scene.

17. The US PR stressed that UN cooperation with the OIC is vital and unique in view of the fact that the OIC is the institutional voice of the Muslim world. The UK PR, for his part, said that the OIC is uniquely positioned to echo to the international community the voice of its Member States regarding their conflicts.

18. The Rwandan PR cited one example that reflects the OICs' tangible comparative advantage in the field of humanitarian assistance by rendering humanitarian aid to the Somali people thanks to the OIC humanitarian office in Mogadishu which is the only channel through which the international community can convey its humanitarian assistance to Somali areas under Al-Shabab's control.

19. Many statements by the UNSC members commended the role of the OIC in actively tackling the problem of the Muslim communities in non-OIC Member States. They referred in particular to the case of the Muslim minority in Myanmar by welcoming the scheduled visit of H.E. the OICSG with a high-level delegation to Myanmar.

20. They also commended the valuable role and cooperation of the OIC with the UN in the humanitarian domain and the establishment of humanitarian offices in some OIC countries, like Somalia and Afghanistan.

21. They unanimously called for closer cooperation between the UN and the OIC on many UN agenda items of international concern and interest like terrorism, the alliance of civilizations, conflict prevention, and the like. They also expressed their appreciation of the decision to set up a mediation unit within the OIC.

22. In parallel, the UNSC members expressed their appreciation for the active engagement of the OIC with many political conflicts, like the Middle East peace process, the conflicts in the Horn of Africa region, the Sahel region etc... They also commended the OIC appointment of a Special Envoy to the Sahel Region. Similarly, they lauded the establishment by the OIC of a human rights commission, a center for the development of women and children.

23. The French PR to the UN highlighted the importance of bilateral consultations which were conducted between France and the OIC as being helpful toward a clearer understanding of many questions of mutual interest. He called for the continuation of this consultative process which should be followed by similar initiatives.

24. Overall, the statements delivered at the high-level special session on strengthening UN-OIC cooperation shared a good number of common points and sentiments. They all showed in a very objective way where the OIC stands today on the international scene and the bright prospects it holds for the future.

25. My personal assessment is that the views held by many UN delegates with whom I had the chance to exchange views is that the UNSC meeting on UN-OIC cooperation was a historical landmark for the OIC image and its evolution. It was in fact the first time ever that such a meeting was held on the bilateral cooperation between the UN and the OIC. It was also the first time ever that the OICSG is invited to address such a meeting. All members of the Security Council were present, which again was a remarkable feat for the OIC. The statements by the UNSC members were quite substantial and substantive. The outcome of the meeting is regarded as an official recognition put on record of the pioneering leadership style of H.E. the OICSG, who has helped elevate the status of the OIC to the high pedestal it enjoys today and has opened up uncharted grounds for the OIC international engagement.

25. The meeting, in my view, was a manifest recognition of the role and importance of the OIC in both international and regional affairs.

26. H.E. Mr. Ayad Madani, the incoming OICSG, also attended the meeting upon an invitation of H.E. the OICSG. All members of the UNSC welcomed the incoming SG and wished him success in his upcoming mission.

27. I should express my increased sense of pride after attending the UNSC high-level meeting on UN-OIC cooperation. I certainly feel just as proud for working for the OIC and under the leadership of H.E. Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu with whom I have entertained a friendship that has lasted for almost two decades.