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SECURITY COUNCIL ADVOCATES GREATER TIES WITH ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION TO RESOLVE CONFLICT IN MIDDLE EAST, OTHER STRIFE-TORN REGIONS

The Security Council today recognized the importance of strengthened cooperation with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), acknowledging the United Nations' continued dialogue with the 57-member body in the areas of peacemaking, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

In a presidential statement adopted by consensus, the Council commended OIC States for their ongoing contribution of troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations. It noted that the United Nations and OIC shared common objectives in promoting resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and a political solution to the Syrian conflict, in line with the 30 June 2012 Geneva Communiqué, as well as in fostering solutions to other conflicts.

Noting the commitment of the United Nations and OIC to foster a global dialogue on tolerance and peace, the Council called for enhanced cooperation towards a better understanding across countries, cultures and civilizations. It also asked the Secretary-General to include in his next biannual report recommendations on ways to enhance such cooperation.

In opening remarks, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon touched on various issues where the United Nations' work with OIC continued to be critical. In Syria, the organizations cooperated on humanitarian and political issues amid heightened tensions between Sunni and Shia communities. OIC could be uniquely placed to launch a major initiative with the United Nations and others to end that upheaval. He urged OIC to do everything possible to rebuild confidence between Muslim communities, as well as to stem the influence of radical armed groups and violent extremists.

Equally, the status quo in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was not sustainable, he said, calling on OIC to help forge a way forward within the agreed time frame for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. He welcomed OIC's constructive engagement to reduce tensions in Myanmar, noting that in Afghanistan, efforts to enhance regional cooperation and build trust were critical. In Mali, following the milestone presidential election, OIC, United Nations and other partners should work together to promote dialogue and reconciliation.

Terrorism, while not associated with any particular cultures or people, had disproportionately affected OIC countries. He urged addressing the conditions conducive to its spread, adding that intercultural dialogue between and within faiths was more important than ever.

Following those remarks, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, said strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and OIC would both "promote multilateralism and boost the international collective security mechanism". With its new vision of "moderation and modernization", OIC was playing an important role in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts, promoting post-conflict reconstruction and defusing humanitarian crises. On numerous occasions, it had expressed its readiness to forge a partnership with the United Nations on early responses to disputes.

Detailing OIC's credentials, he said it had established a centre for the development of women, an independent human rights commission and an international cooperation and humanitarian affairs department. It also had hosted at its headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, a number of international contacts groups, including those on Afghanistan and Somalia. In the Middle East, OIC was ready to partner with the United Nations to improve socioeconomic life in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

He described radicalization based on religious faith and belief as a "daunting" global challenge. OIC had been vigilant in exposing the dangerous extremist agenda and would continue to combat the radicalization that led to violent extremism.

In the debate that followed, delegates hailed OIC's track record in promoting peace and security, citing its mediation and other efforts in Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan and Myanmar, as well as its substantial connections in areas where the United Nations did not enjoy full access. Moreover, half of the top 10 troop- and police-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping operations were from OIC. Given its vast expanse, it was only natural that the world's two largest intergovernmental bodies cooperate closely.

Yet OIC's cooperation with the United Nations had not reached its full potential, many said, urging the bodies to focus more intently on issues, such combating terrorism, resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Syrian conflict, and fostering peace in both the Sahel and Horn of Africa. Some recommended adhering to the work matrix adopted in 2012, which listed fields of joint cooperation. Others said Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, on regional arrangements, should guide such work.

Cooperation was particularly important in the search for a lasting and fair solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, several stressed, as well as for a political solution to the crisis in Syria. Mbarka Bouaida, Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco, said that Palestine was the *raison d'être* behind OIC's establishment. She urged both organizations to respect cultural and religious diversity. "Peace hinges on this," she stressed.

In a similar vein, Azerbaijan's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Elmar Maharram oglu Mammadyarov, said that misperceptions and prejudicial practices, as well as attempts to create a conceptual link between Islam and terror, were unacceptable. China's delegate said cooperation could take several forms but must focus on results. It should build on relative advantages and, above all, be guided by the principles of sovereign equality and peaceful dispute settlement.

Zeroing in on internal matters, Togo's representative pressed OIC to strengthen relations among its members, so as to end the internal rivalries that undermined its search for negotiated conflict settlements. It also should ensure that the provisions in its Ten-Year Programme of Action that promoted human rights, specifically for women, were implemented, which would reduce the factors that led to internal crises.

Also speaking today was the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs of Argentina.

Representatives of Rwanda, Luxembourg, Australia, Pakistan, Guatemala, United States, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom, France and Russian Federation also spoke.

The meeting began at 10:10 a.m. and ended at 12:20 p.m.

Presidential Statement

The full text of presidential statement S/PRST/2013/16 reads as follows:

"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."

Background

For its debate this morning on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security: strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Security Council had before it a concept paper on the subject, contained in a letter from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (document [S/2013/588](#)).

Briefings

BAN KI-MOON, Secretary-General of the United Nations, said the challenges of peace and security were 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," he said. The United Nations and OIC were working closely on issues ranging from conflict prevention and resolution to counter-terrorism, human rights and humanitarian affairs to intercultural dialogue and sustainable development. Ongoing cooperation to address the conflict in Syria included humanitarian and political efforts. The United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons were making progress in dismantling and destroying Syria's chemical weapons programme.

"But we must also spare no effort to reach a comprehensive political agreement — one that reflects the will of the Syrian people," he said. The war had heightened tensions between Sunni and Shia communities. The tragic and violent manifestations of the divisions were seen in many parts of the Muslim world, which was profoundly worrying. The OIC could be uniquely placed to launch a major initiative working with the United Nations and others to help end this upheaval. He urged the OIC and all leaders to do everything possible to repair the rifts and rebuild confidence between Muslim communities, as well as to stem the influence of radical armed groups and violent extremists.

Israelis and Palestinians must quickly see visible peace dividends from the resumption of peace talks, he said. The status quo in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was not sustainable and that occupation was deeply damaging to Israelis and Palestinians alike. The OIC could help forge a way forward within the agreed time frame. The underlying factors of communal tensions in Myanmar, including the question of citizenship for the Rohingya population, must be addressed. Calling on Myanmar to act firmly against the dissemination of hate literature and the perpetrators, he welcomed OIC's constructive engagement to reduce tensions. In Afghanistan, efforts to enhance regional cooperation and build trust were critical at this time of transition. In Mali, following the milestone presidential election, OIC, United Nations and other partners should work together to promote dialogue and reconciliation. He commended OIC's continued efforts to bring peace to Darfur.

Work must continue to achieve progress on issues that extended beyond regional boundaries, he said. Terrorism, while not associated with any particular cultures or people, had disproportionately affected OIC member countries. He stressed the importance of addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of extremism and terrorism, adding that intercultural dialogue between and within faiths was more important than

ever. "Let us keep working together to foster a culture of peace and coexistence through efforts such as the UN Alliance of Civilizations. The United Nations and the OIC must deepen strategic dialogue," he said, calling for a pledge to work from this foundation to build a better world for all.

EKMELEDDIN IHSANOGLU, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, said the body attached great importance to its relationship with the United Nations, underscoring his readiness to develop an effective partnership to promote peace, justice, human rights and development. Indeed, OIC had made "tremendous" efforts to sustain a network of close cooperative relationships with the world body and other international, regional and subregional organizations.

"In a rapidly changing world, strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and OIC will both promote multilateralism and boost the international collective security mechanism," he said. From its new vision of "moderation and modernization", OIC was playing an important role in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts, promoting post-conflict reconstruction and defusing humanitarian crises. On many occasions, it had expressed its readiness to develop an effective partnership with the United Nations to form early responses to disputes.

As the second-largest intergovernmental organization, OIC had since inception made the realization of United Nations Charter principles a priority, he said. Its own charter stressed the importance of all member States respecting national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. The 2005 Ten-Year Programme of Action, which paralleled the Millennium Development Goals, was a blueprint for reform, promoting moderation and modernization in the Muslim world.

He went on to say OIC had made sustained efforts to increase its role in the maintenance of peace and security, conflict prevention and conflict resolution, having established a centre for the development of women, an independent human rights commission and an international cooperation and humanitarian affairs department. Further, it had contributed to the work of the United Nations in the areas of conflict prevention, crisis management, mediation, humanitarian assistance, and the promotion of human rights and rule of law. It had hosted a number of international contacts groups, such as those on Afghanistan and Somalia, as well as regional mediation meetings.

Detailing specific efforts, he said OIC was preparing a "promising" joint action to support human development in Somalia, in addition to working with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation on a project to develop capacity in education, health care and sustainable livelihood in that country. OIC looked forward to greater engagement with the United Nations so as to enhance its capacity on the basis of its own needs and strategic priorities, he said, citing the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in the areas of peace, security and development as a good example in that regard.

Noting that many issues on the Council's agenda related to the Muslim world, he stressed the importance of maintaining strong cooperation. At the same time, there was a need to expedite reform of the Council by promoting its transparency, accountability, and full democratization. "Any reform of the Security Council must ensure adequate representation of OIC member States in any category of membership," especially given that as OIC represented 57 member States and 1.6 billion people, he emphasized.

Turning to the Middle East, he said a credible peace process towards a two-State solution remained a core priority, stressing that the Council must do its utmost to resolve the Palestinian question in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Israeli-Palestinian agreements reached within the framework of the Middle East peace process. The key to a lasting peace lay in ending the Israeli occupation and establishing an independent, sovereign Palestinian State. Ongoing peace negotiations provided a valuable window of opportunity not to be missed, one that required an immediate end to all illegal acts, including settlement building. OIC was committed to assisting Palestinians and was ready to partner with the United Nations in improving their socioeconomic life in the Palestinian territories, including occupied East Jerusalem.

On Syria, he welcomed all efforts to convene the Geneva II Conference, urging the Council to assume its duty to protect Syrians and bring a peaceful solution to the conflict through a political dialogue. He also voiced concern at Armenia's occupation of the Azerbaijani territories of Nagorno-Karabakh and called for a resolution of the conflict on the basis of respect for Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the inviolability of its recognized borders. Non-implementation of the relevant resolution undermined the Council's authority, he cautioned.

On the humanitarian front, he said OIC and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) had conducted a joint needs-assessment mission to Syria in 2012, which resulted in a comprehensive humanitarian response plan. Similar missions had been carried out in the Sahel and the Philippines. OIC had done its best to help meet humanitarian needs in Myanmar, he said, adding that he would discuss the matter with that country's Government during his visit next month.

Finally, he described radicalization based on religious faith and belief as one of the most daunting global challenges. Religious and inter-communal hatred had motivated extremists and fostered marginalization, negative stereotyping and racial discrimination, seriously threatening global peace and security. For its part, OIC had been vigilant in exposing the dangerous extremist agenda, raising global awareness of the need to combat intolerance and stigmatization, he said, urging world leaders to support dialogue, mutual recognition and respect for cultures and religions. OIC would continue to combat radicalization that led to violent extremism, and remained strongly committed to an active partnership with the United Nations in promoting peace, security and development, he said.

The Council then adopted by consensus a presidential statement (document PRST/2013/16) on the subject of today's debate.

Statements

ELMAR MAHARRAM OGLU MAMMADYAROV, Council President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, spoke in his national capacity, saying many issues on the Council's agenda related to the Islamic world and OIC was naturally seized of them. OIC was not only the organization that represented all Muslim nations; it was the second largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations, with 57 Member States and five observers from four continents. It had 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. Calling for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, he welcomed the resumption of direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. OIC member States and the international organizations attending recent conferences had pledged to contribute to the improvement of Palestinian social and economic development. On Syria, he called for a political solution to the conflict and an end to the people's suffering.

Turning to his country's conflict with Armenia, he called for the implementation of key Council demands made over the years. He went on to emphasize the fundamental contribution of Islamic culture to global civilization, science and education, saying that Islam was the religion of moderation and advocated tolerance. Misperceptions and prejudicial practices, as well as attempts to create a conceptual link between Islam and terror were unacceptable, he said, adding that it was critical persistently to stress the importance of respect for and understanding of religious and cultural diversity.

MBARKA BOUAIDA, Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco, was pleased that the two organizations were implementing their 2012 commitments, especially to strengthen security in Somalia and Afghanistan. OIC offices in Mogadishu and Kabul offered support to the United Nations presence in those areas. In the Sahel, a joint mission of OCHA and OIC was working to alleviate suffering, especially in Mali. That humanitarian cooperation must continue, in order to help Mali in its reconstruction. The vision of Morocco's King was to strengthen territorial integrity, and peace and security in Mali. A local hospital had been set up, with 500 imams sent from Morocco.

She went on to say that Palestine was the *raison d'être* behind OIC's establishment. Indeed, the organization had always supported Palestinians. Cooperation was of primary importance, including on mechanisms between the United Nations and OIC to help find a lasting and fair solution to that question. She hoped to see a partnership based on a long-term strategic approach that would consider both organizations' needs and interests, and which would foster their complementarity. She also urged both organizations to respect cultural and religious diversity. "Peace hinges on this", she stressed, as it helped to combat religious hatred and all other types of discrimination. Morocco was ready to back that cooperation among all peoples.

MARIA DEL CARMEN SQUEFF, Undersecretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, said the role of regional organizations was vital in today's world, particularly amidst the changes it had seen since the founding of the United Nations. It was no surprise that differences in regional realities had led to a growth in regional organizations. It was important to build regional consensus in the maintenance of peace and security in a globalized world. The work being carried out by the Union of South American Nations, known as UNASUR, illustrated that societies in South America were willing to peacefully settle disputes. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States was working to resolve one of the most serious bilateral crisis in the region recently. Each region had different needs and realities. The United Nations must, therefore, determine the manner and scope of cooperation based on those realities.

OIC, which had members on four continents, was destined to play an important role in such areas as the Middle East peace process, disarmament, self-determination, peace, dialogue, decolonization, human rights, capacity-building and environmental protection, as well as the fights against terrorism and diseases, she said. Peace and security were not merely military concepts. Shared values and ideals built societies, she said, urging the United Nations and OIC to strengthen their bonds of cooperation.

EUGENE-RICHARD GASANA (Rwanda) emphasized the growing role of OIC in conflict prevention and the promotion of dialogue, citing its track record of mediation and efforts to restore peace in Somalia, Sudan and

Afghanistan. Half of the top 10 troop- and police-contributing countries were from OIC. But OIC's cooperation with the United Nations had yet to reach its full potential. "This cooperation should be substantially streamlined," he said, especially in mediating and resolving international conflicts. OIC had expertise in tackling cultural components that always had driven conflicts in its member States, an invaluable strength for culturally sensitive mediation. Its cultural competencies gave it access to conflict zones that were unreachable by the United Nations. Its rigorous understanding of Somali culture, for example, had allowed humanitarian assistance to reach areas controlled by Al-Shabaab. Such work could be done in Syria. The United Nations must maintain its partnership with OIC to keep the channels of communication open in areas where it did not enjoy full access.

SYLVIE LUCAS (Luxembourg) said the imperative of strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations was not only desirable but also extremely vital. The work of OIC and the United Nations around the world was crucial, she said, urging the organizations to step up work on preventive diplomacy. Calling for a fair, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, she stressed the contributions of OIC in peacebuilding efforts. Citing the experience of Guinea, where religious leaders had a key role to play, she said OIC had a vital role. On Syria, she urged the Government to work towards alleviating the humanitarian catastrophe in line with the Council's presidential statement, adding that the search for a political solution must continue in earnest through the collective efforts of all.

GARY QUINLAN (Australia) said OIC's partnership with the United Nations was crucial to the collective maintenance of peace and security. It had various comparative advantages, based in part on its moral authority, strengths on which the United Nations should build. Those strengths had been seen in OIC's mediation efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia. Its Peace, Security and Mediation Unit offered new opportunities in the area of peaceful dispute settlement. In Somalia and Yemen, OIC had negotiated better access for humanitarian actors. He commended its campaign against polio, noting that polio had resurfaced in Syria for the first time in 14 years. He shared the concern over the conflict in Syria, which was destabilizing Syria's neighbours, urging the Council to do more to protect civilians and promote humanitarian assistance. He agreed that negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis were an opportunity that "we should not miss". He urged a focus on areas of shared interest and complementarities between the two organizations.

MASOOD KHAN (Pakistan) said OIC had become a mainstream international organization for building peace, security and understanding. Given the organization's vast expanse, it was only natural that OIC and the United Nations cooperate closely. They had been doing so productively on a wide array of issues. OIC was a natural partner and interlocutor for the United Nations because of its close cooperation with other major regional organizations around the world. Millions in OIC countries lived in conflict or post-conflict situations, which posed a threat to international peace, security and development. OIC had lent a helping hand in humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts around the world, he said, stressing that it played an active role on the Kashmir issue. Troops from OIC countries accounted for the majority of United Nations peacekeepers. The two organizations should work closely on six specific issues: combating terrorism; building a harmonious world; the Arab-Israeli conflict; the Syrian conflict; the Sahel region and Horn of Africa; and social, economic, human rights and environmental issues.

GERT ROSENTHAL (Guatemala) said his country strongly valued intraregional cooperation. OIC had a unique feature of not being a regional body; it brought together countries from disparate corners of the world that were united by a shared vision and values. It had cooperation experience with the United Nations, through its various incarnations since 1969, including in the area of humanitarian efforts. He welcomed its success in the areas of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and combating terrorism. Its participation in Somalia, Mali, Myanmar and Darfur were a testament to its invaluable work in attaining peace, and he hoped such efforts would contribute to the search for a solution to conflicts in the Middle East. There was always a margin for the United Nations to improve its relations with regional and subregional organizations. Priority must be given to partnerships focused on conflict prevention with organizations that had a peacekeeping mandate, and that could be identified as crucial stakeholders in conflict resolution. There was no doubt that OIC was in that group.

ROSEMARY A. DICARLO (United States) said it was entirely natural that the world's two largest organizations should cooperate so closely on a variety of pressing priorities. OIC member States were top troop-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping operations, she said, lauding the organization's work in reinforcing the work of United Nations agencies and the Council's agenda. In recognition of this role, the United States Agency for International Development had signed an agreement with OIC on ending famine in the Horn of Africa. She welcomed the establishment of an independent OIC human rights committee to address issues within the Member States, as well as the organization's efforts to foster deeper trust between Afghanistan and its neighbours. OIC had become a strong and respected voice in the fight against extremism. On the Syrian conflict, she welcomed OIC's statement on the need for a conference in Geneva and its continuing campaign for humanitarian funds. On the Arab-Israeli conflict, she said the Islamic world's support would be a vital catalyst for the success of peace negotiations.

SUL KYUNG-HOON (Republic of Korea) urged a more "vigorous" cooperation between the Council and OIC, saying that countries from the Maghreb to the Levant faced nation-building challenges following the Arab Spring. He expressed concern that fundamentalism and extremism tended to fill the vacuums created by political

turmoil. Islamic peace and stability had become central to the pursuit of global peace and security. OIC had worked with the United Nations in restoring peace and security in Afghanistan, Somalia and Darfur. The International Contact Group on Afghanistan highlighted OIC's central role in helping that country transition into a stable, prosperous nation. He hoped its cooperation with the United Nations would strengthen in diverse areas, underscoring the value of the 2012 "Matrix of Activities within the Framework of United Nations-OIC collaboration". Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter should guide efforts to foster closer cooperation. Citing the Secretary-General's recommendations, he said the roles of both organizations should be further elaborated. OIC also should clarify its comparative advantages vis-à-vis the United Nations and other regional and subregional organizations.

MARK LYALL GRANT (United Kingdom), noting that his Government had appointed its first representative to OIC in 2011, pledged to deepen cooperation on a variety of issues. The Council's engagement with regional organizations like OIC made the United Nations outward-looking and better able to fulfil its role. OIC offered a unique perspective and could play a constructive role on different international issues. He acknowledged the important stance OIC had taken on the issues of peace and security among Member States. Stating that the suspension of Syria's membership from the organization served a powerful message to the Government, he called for a political settlement. On the Arab-Israeli peace process, bold choices were required to achieve a lasting settlement the people deserved. He welcomed the presidential statement adopted today, urging the Secretary-General to recommend ways of intensifying cooperation with OIC.

KODJO MENAN (Togo) cited OIC's appointment of a Special Envoy for the Malian Sahel, support for inter-Afghan reconciliation and efforts to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis as signs the organization had positioned itself as strategic partner to the United Nations. He urged it to strengthen its internal links, so as to end rivalries among its member States that had undermined its efforts to find negotiated solutions to conflicts. OIC also should urge its members to implement the Ten-Year Programme of Action, notably provisions that promoted women's rights. The United Nations and OIC should work to ensure that the freedom of expression and the struggle against discrimination based on religion could coexist. On terrorism, he urged that cooperation be enhanced in ways that supported OIC States in facing that challenge. The response should not be limited to security; it should be associated with the principles of good governance and respect for human rights. Implementation of the work matrix adopted in 2012, which listed fields of cooperation between the United Nations and OIC, should remain a priority.

GERARD ARAUD (France) said his country had named a special envoy to OIC and maintained regular discussions on issues of vital importance such as Syria, Mali, international terrorism and human rights. Welcoming OIC's 10-year agenda, he said the organization's role was essential in achieving the United Nations objectives. Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, OIC had underscored the imperative of international action. It had strongly condemned the killings, as well as the use of chemical weapons, and worked towards alleviating the humanitarian suffering there. On the Israeli-Palestinian talks, he expressed hope for the achievement of just and lasting peace and hailed OIC as a vigorous partner. On terrorism, he lauded OIC's condemnation of attacks under the guise of religion, as well as its efforts to promote intercultural dialogue. He urged stronger cooperation between the organizations based on the United Nations Charter and shared values.

LIU JIEYI (China) said the Council shouldered the primary responsibility for maintaining world peace and security, while regional and subregional organizations had become a useful complement. Cooperation between the United Nations and OIC should be guided by the United Nations Charter and the basic norms governing international relations. The Charter should uphold the principles of sovereign equality and peaceful dispute settlement, and strengthen coordination through the use of good offices and mediation. Attention should be paid to overall coordination, with an eye to comparative advantages. OIC had played an important role in settling regional conflicts and fostering post-conflict reconstruction. Cooperation should build on relative advantages, so as to complement each others' efforts. It could take several forms and must focus on results. China had developed relations with Islamic countries, having formed mutually supportive partnerships. It would work to elevate cooperation between the Council and OIC.

VITALY I. CHURKIN (Russian Federation) said the contemporary challenges of international peace and security required the active involvement of regional organizations. Organizations underpinned by shared values would be effective and vital. Preventing people from sliding into inter-faith dissensions was not only the task of the United Nations alone, but also that of regional organizations. Acts of terrorism must be condemned and countered. He called for energetic efforts against denigration of faiths. Without promotion of a dialogue among faiths, building international peace and security were impossible. The Russian Federation's relations with OIC were developed on the basis of mutual respect and shared values. A cooperation framework between the two spanned a gamut of issues, he said, adding that the presidential statement adopted today would help bolster that cooperation.

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