

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon:

Address to the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Vienna, 4 November 2014

VIENNA, 4 November (UN Information Service) - Thank you for your warm welcome. It is a pleasure to once again address the OSCE Permanent Council. I appeared before this body in April 2010. It is good to be back.

This feels like a homecoming. When I served as Korean Ambassador in Vienna in the late 1990s, the Republic of Korea joined as an Asian Partner for Cooperation.

As Secretary-General of the United Nations, I have continued to deepen ties between our two organizations. This is a commitment that I know is fully shared by Secretary-General Zannier. I thank him for his leadership.

I was honoured to attend the OSCE Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan - the first such gathering in over a decade.

It is vital that UN partnerships with regional organizations grow ever stronger and closer.

This idea is enshrined in Chapter VIII of our visionary United Nations Charter which will celebrate its 70th birthday next year.

Almost three decades before the Helsinki Final Act, our founders knew what the OSCE and other regional organizations have since come to prove: Regional bodies bring new tools and a finely tuned understanding to conflict prevention and resolution.

Perhaps this is even clearer as we gather now - on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The OSCE - and the CSCE before it -- played a pivotal role in easing divisions, healing wounds and managing change. Your leadership and engagement helped set the stage for a new era of international cooperation.

Yet a quarter of a century later, we are still wrestling with much unfinished business and striving to ward off the return of Cold War ghosts to haunt our times.

We are a world in transition.

New powers are emerging. Urbanization and migration are on the rise. We are striving for a more sustainable and equitable path of development. Distinctions between the national and the international are falling away.

At the same time, the global security landscape is shifting dramatically.

Civil conflicts, coupled with terrorism, organized crime, illegal drug-trafficking, and health crises such as Ebola, are threatening millions of people. More often than not, these dangers transcend borders.

In many countries seen as models of integration, divisive politics are on the rise.

In these and many other ways, the foundational principles we share are being tested.

Mr. Chairman, you defined three objectives to guide your organization: fostering security and stability; improving people's lives; and strengthening the OSCE to act.

The first two objectives align with core principles of the UN Charter and echo the key principles of the Helsinki Final Act. The third focuses on the need to adapt to today's challenges.

Allow me to structure my remarks today in precisely the same way, by stressing three shared and linked challenges: first, fostering security and stability; second, improving people's lives; and third, enhancing our common ability to address shared challenges.

First, security and stability.

Let me start with the situation in Ukraine, which remains a matter of deep concern and which has created divisions that stretch beyond the region.

The "elections" in the eastern part of the country this past Sunday are an unfortunate and counterproductive development.

I urge all concerned to urgently recommit to full implementation of the letter and spirit of the Minsk Protocol and Memorandum, designed to bring peace and stability to all of Ukraine.

In addition to the tragedy of lost lives both on land and in the sky, the crisis risks jeopardizing our collective ability to solve global problems.

I want to commend the OSCE for its early and active engagement and its prominent role on the ground. We have a common responsibility to defuse tensions - and we have been working hand-in-hand.

UN mediation advisors have provided technical support to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.

In addition to addressing immediate issues, we are committed to work together alongside the OSCE and other international actors to provide long-term support to Ukraine to tackle the deep-rooted issues underlying this crisis.

For example, our organizations have expertise in supporting elections, mediation and national dialogues; assisting rule of law and security sector reform; advising judicial and constitutional reform processes; as well as in designing economic and trade policies.

Let us pool those strengths in the months ahead.

Of course, the OSCE region faces other pressing security challenges.

Long-standing tensions in the South Caucasus remain unresolved and periodically flare up to potentially dangerous levels.

The impact of the transition in Afghanistan on Central Asia is also a leading concern.

Radicalization of youth and the threat of terrorism throughout the region require urgent attention.

Addressing these issues is also central to promoting long-term development.

That leads to the second shared objective: improving people's lives.

I have just concluded a tour of the Horn of Africa region with the Dr. Jim Kim, President of the World Bank, and the leaders of a number of regional organizations including the European Union and African Union and African Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank.

This was my third joint Africa regional trip with Dr. Kim. Last year, we travelled together to the Great Lakes region and the Sahel.

Our message in all three places was the same. Peace and development are two sides of the same coin. If we want stability and security - we need sustainable development and respect for human rights.

Now we are at a critical juncture at the UN in Member States' deliberations on the post-2015 sustainable development framework.

Building on the Millennium Development Goals, the new framework will be even broader in scope.

One of the proposed goals includes a specific focus on peaceful societies, human rights and inclusive, accountable governance as crucial to sustainable development - and tackling social and economic exclusion and environmental degradation.

The OSCE, with long-standing experience can and should play an active role in shaping this debate.

By working together, we can be the first generation to end extreme poverty and the last generation to live with climate change as an existential threat.

That brings me to my third and final shared objective - enhancing our ability to act together.

The UN and OSCE have much to build upon.

Staff exchanges and joint training allow us to share information and best practices as well as explore joint actions on issues such as conflict prevention and resolution.

In Central Asia, the OSCE and the UN -- through its Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy -- are exploring ways to strengthen cooperation in counter-terrorism and other pressing cross-border challenges.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime, our Office of Disarmament Affairs, and others are working closely on a wide range of issues.

As we deepen our partnership, we also need to look within our own organizations to ensure we are equipped to tackle 21st century challenges.

I know that is what your Helsinki+40 process is all about.

There are many big, emerging questions for all of us.

How do we best respond to emerging multidimensional, cross-border challenges such as Ebola and the threat of "foreign fighters"?

How do we most effectively enhance regional stability and address the massive displacement of populations through disaster and conflict?

At the UN, we are trying in various ways to stay abreast of new challenges.

I have announced a major review of our peacebuilding architecture and peacekeeping operations which will be led by Nobel Laureate and former leader of Timor-Leste, Jose Ramos-Horta.

And we have put in place a major initiative we call "Human Rights Up Front" -since we know that rights violations are often an early indicator of political upheaval and atrocity crimes.

The inability of Member States and the United Nations in recent decades to prevent and stop a number of large-scale human rights violations has had disastrous consequences.

We are determined to make the changes to avoid such problems in the future.

Your mechanisms such as the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media are critical and complementary tools.

We must do more to combat discrimination and marginalization, including of minority groups, which is indispensable to the pluralistic, tolerant and progressive societies we want.

Once again I want to thank you for your leadership and partnership.

Twenty-five years after the collapse of the Berlin Wall ... almost 40 years after the Helsinki Final Act ... and almost 70 years after the UN Charter was adopted ... we have full agenda and much work ahead.

The United Nations counts on the OSCE to help lead this vast region to greater security and cooperation which, in turn will help lead our world to greater peace, development and human rights.

As a body with a large membership, a broad mandate, and a consensus-based culture, the OSCE is well-placed to maintain a constructive dialogue that can lead to sustainable solutions.

And in turn, I pledge my full support and partnership.

Thank you for your commitment and leadership. Thank you.

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