

Mr. President

Excellencies,

I am grateful for this opportunity to address the UN Security Council.

The point that I wish to make today is simply put. The UN and the OSCE, as the largest and most inclusive regional organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, are and must remain partners of destiny -- engaged together in the search to strengthen an international order founded on co-operative security.

I would like to highlight two ways in which the OSCE under the Finnish chairmanship is cooperating with the UN.

First, we want the OSCE to promote the implementation of UN principles, conventions and other instruments reached at the global level. The OSCE provides substantive support to the UN in addressing horizontal issues such as anti-terrorism and efforts to combat the spread of small arms and light weapons as well as fighting the trafficking in human beings. The promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination need to be addressed effectively, and the OSCE is contributing to the UN-led Alliance of Civilizations initiative.

Second, OSCE early warning, crisis management, and post-conflict activities are crucial components of the UN-based international order. The UN and the OSCE are both in the business of preventing and resolving conflicts. For my part, I have made an effort to re-energize the OSCE in its work on conflict resolution and crisis management. It has been clear to me that the OSCE needs to work closely together with the UN as well as other partners to be successful.

I would like highlight three challenges that the UN and the OSCE need to address together.

The OSCE has been working at the forefront of international efforts to build a foundation for a lasting peace in Georgia.

As OSCE Chairman-in-Office, I have been driven by two goals since the beginning of the war in Georgia: first, to stop the fighting and monitor the withdrawal of Russian and Georgian forces to their peacetime positions and second, to start consolidating the basis for long-term security and stability.

I visited Tbilisi and Moscow when the fighting was still going on, and explored the possibilities of an immediate ceasefire. Agreement on the ceasefire was subsequently reached by the French and Russian Presidents. I kept the UN Secretary General fully briefed on my efforts.

The OSCE and its Mission to Georgia have had a crucial role in monitoring the implementation of the ceasefire agreement from day one. The OSCE swiftly decided to increase the number of OSCE Military Monitoring Officers by up to a hundred.

The first twenty Monitoring Officers were deployed to areas adjacent to South Ossetia within days of that decision. I visited Georgia for the second time to promote the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and the humanitarian efforts in the region, and I brought the first two Finnish monitors with me. The OSCE will of course work together with the UN and EU monitors on the ground.

The negotiations on the deployment of the remaining eighty OSCE monitors have proven to be difficult as they touch on issues of great political sensitivity. Nonetheless, we are still working toward deploying them and entrusting them with a meaningful mandate. At the same time, we expect the eight original Military Monitoring Officers to regain access to South Ossetia in accordance with their mandate. We also expect the re-opening of the OSCE Field Office in Tshkinvali to be possible soon.

On the second objective -- building the basis for long-term stability in Georgia and more widely -- I am convinced that the UN Security Council should have a key role as in all questions concerning international peace and security.

In this respect, I wish to share with you the ideas that Finland has put forward. Our starting point is the need for a comprehensive approach to the conflicts in Georgia – in South Ossetia, where the OSCE has taken the lead, and in Abkhazia, which has been managed within the UN framework.

I believe that the implementation of the ceasefire agreement would be best followed up by a new international platform with the authority and the resources to deal with both conflicts.

The new platform could be convened by the UN, the OSCE and the EU, together with other key stakeholders. They would provide, first, an international mechanism to assess information provided by the monitoring activities of the UN, OSCE and EU field operations, and second, political leadership to international talks on the security and stability arrangements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

I am pleased that the OSCE is fully involved in the preparations of the Geneva Conference, scheduled for 15 October, along with the United Nations and the European Union. In this work I count on cooperation with the successive OSCE Chairmanship countries Spain, Greece, Kazakhstan and Lithuania as well as with other OSCE participating States.

Mr. President,

The OSCE participating States have given their support to continued OSCE engagement in Kosovo. The continued UN-OSCE cooperation is vital. An essential pillar of the UNMIK under Resolution 1244, the OSCE has its largest operation with 800 mission members on the ground, throughout all of Kosovo's municipalities, helping to build strong local institutions.

I consider it very important that the UN Secretary General referred specifically to the need for a continued OSCE presence in Kosovo in his report of 15 June. To ensure regional stability and sustainable peace, the OSCE must remain an integral part of the international presence in Kosovo also after the current reconfiguration of UNMIK. The OSCE mission will also have to establish a working relationship with the EULEX operation.

In current conditions, the importance of the OSCE Mission's scope of action and access can hardly be overstated. The OSCE's work in promoting democratic values at the grassroots level and for protecting the interests of all communities remains a vital asset in the overall international effort.

This matters also for the whole region. We have made progress in resolving the disputes that tore apart the former Yugoslavia in the past decade, but much remains to be done. For this, coordinated and coherent international action is vital, and the OSCE has here again an important role to play.

Mr. President

The importance of effective international action is also true in other parts of the OSCE area. Here, I wish to say a word about OSCE engagement with Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is an OSCE Partner for Co-operation. It shares common borders with three OSCE participating States, and many more are engaged inside the country, in international frameworks such as UNAMA and ISAF. Clearly, the OSCE has a strategic interest in the stabilization of the country.

Last year, at their meeting in Madrid, OSCE Foreign Ministers pledged to intensify OSCE engagement with Afghanistan, including through activities to help secure the borders between the Central Asian participating States and Afghanistan, and through enhanced assistance in areas related to policing and the fight against drug trafficking.

Work on taking this decision forward is under way, and it is our intention that concrete projects will be launched before the end of the year.

This work must be underpinned by a strong consensus among the 56 OSCE participating States, and debate continues on the details of our engagement. The success of a future OSCE effort will rely also on the sustained commitment of adequate resources, and on effective co-operation with other international organizations in Afghanistan.

As the UN is the main co-ordinator of the international involvement in Afghanistan, we count on its support. All OSCE initiatives will be conducted in full co-ordination with UNAMA and other UN entities. I hope that OSCE engagement with Afghanistan will be sustained and meaningful. This will naturally require coherent and sustained dialogue and interaction with other international actors present on the ground.

Mr. President,

Recent events highlight the fragility of the rules-based international order that the UN, with the support of the OSCE, strives to build. The crisis in Georgia has underlined the critical importance of cooperation between the two organizations.

It is incumbent on us all now to draw lessons from recent events.

A first one must be that there is no such thing as a 'frozen conflict.' It is time to banish this term from the political lexicon and act quickly to settle outstanding conflicts in our region.

A second lesson is that we should re-direct the work of our international security structures -- in the spirit of effective multilateralism -- so that they provide real security and stability to the member countries and their inhabitants. The OSCE should be part of such long-term efforts, and we should start them already at the Helsinki ministerial meeting in December.