

Message of the Secretary-General,
Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali,
delivered by Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky,
Director-General of UNOG
to the Summit Meeting of the
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Lisbon, 2 December 1996

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

I am honoured to transmit the following message of the Secretary-General to the summit meeting. “In recent years, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have developed excellent working relations in the search for solutions to various crises. I am confident this fruitful collaboration will continue, building on what has already been achieved.

Contacts between the United Nations and the OSCE aiming at the consolidation and expansion of our working relationship occur at many different levels. The OSCE has observer status in the General Assembly. Representatives of many United Nations bodies are attending this Summit, among them the Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environmental Programme, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The OSCE participated actively in the two meetings on cooperation with regional organizations held in 1994 and this past February at United Nations Headquarters in New York. And I myself meet regularly with both the Chairman-in-Office and the Secretary-General of the OSCE.

I very much welcome the development of closer ties between the OSCE and our Organization. The United Nations is a universal organization, with a global mandate. But in order to deal effectively with all the threats to international peace and security there is no doubt that it also needs to enlist the full support and participation of regional organizations such as the OSCE. The important role of regional arrangements in the maintenance of international peace and security is fully recognized and spelt out in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. In concrete terms, the growing record of cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations already includes complementary efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Abkhazia, Georgia and other parts of the Caucasus, and in Tajikistan.”

Mr. Chairman,

1. Allow me to add a few words on how we see the cooperation with the OSCE from the viewpoint of Geneva, the second largest centre of United Nations activity.
2. In our daily interaction with many different regional entities, we see the OSCE as a qualitatively new kind of regional structure - transcontinental in nature - which extends not only from Vladivostok to Vancouver, but now also from Murmansk to Malta, from Dublin to Dushambe.
3. While New York remains entrusted with decision-making with respect to the general aspects of our cooperation with regional organizations, the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) offers its know-how and expertise.

4. UNOG, as the humanitarian capital of the United Nations, is the operational arm of the system with respect to human rights, the strengthening of democratic institutions, humanitarian activities, refugees and migration.

5. In the economic field, UNOG, through the Economic Commission for Europe, works closely with the OSCE Economic Forum and provides active and continuous support to the OSCE Secretariat with respect to the economic aspects of security in Europe. Economic instruments developed in ECE to facilitate transboundary operations contribute to good neighbourly relations and integration within the single European space. They can prove useful in peace-building in regions affected by conflicts.

6. UNOG sees as one of its main tasks to reinforce, and in some cases institutionalize, cooperation with like-minded regional organizations. One good example of this is the process of informal tripartite consultations between UNOG, the OSCE and the Council of Europe which we established in 1994 and through which we have improved the flow of information, sharing of experiences, and interaction in the field.

7. May I also highlight the Regional Conference to address the problems of refugees, displaced persons, other forms of involuntary displacement and returnees in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and neighbouring States which was held earlier this year in Geneva under the joint auspices of the OSCE, UNHCR and IOM. This very successful collaborative effort has been effective in reaffirming internationally established standards, including a wide-range of minority rights, and offered an institutional framework for dealing with population

movements in that region, as well as suggesting preventive measures for cooperation for the future.

8. Let me assure you that the United Nations system in Geneva, and elsewhere, in its endeavour to achieve a better division of labour and improve complementarity with our partners, remain at the full disposal of our Member States, to further strengthen our collaboration with OSCE.

Excellencies,

In conclusion, on behalf of the Secretary-General I would like to appeal to you to “continue and further develop our valuable partnership - in preventive diplomacy, crisis management, arms control and disarmament and post-crisis stabilization and rehabilitation. It has achieved a great deal in just a short while. And it serves as a model of cooperation between the United Nations and a regional organization. In that spirit, the Secretary-General offers you his best wishes for a successful summit meeting.

Thank you.”