



United Nations

Press Release

Information Service

United Nations Office at Geneva

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DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S OPENING STATEMENT TO HIGH-LEVEL TRIPARTITE INFORMAL
MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, AND THE OSCE

Following is the opening statement made today by Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Director-General of the Office of the United Nations at Geneva, to the annual High-Level Informal Meeting of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), together with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organization for Migration, and the European Commission :

"It is a pleasure for me to open the ninth annual high-level meeting of the informal process of tripartite consultations between the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. On behalf of the United Nations, I am especially pleased to greet the two new Secretaries-General, Dr. Walter Schwimmer and Ambassador Jan Kubis, and the representatives of the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the Chairman-in-Office of OSCE. We are also joined by our long-standing partners in this tripartite process, the International Committee for the Red Cross and the International Organization for Migration. Today, for the first time, a representative of the European Commission is also with us. We hope it will be the beginning of an on-going and fruitful dialogue.

The purpose of these informal tripartite meetings, which were first launched in 1993, is to exchange views, share experiences, and propose concrete suggestions on areas in which our organizations might collaborate more effectively. To enhance our comparative advantages and, where possible, avoid duplication of activity. Resources are scarce, donors and funding institutions are faced with a daunting array of competing needs and demands. When these meetings first began, their was exclusively humanitarian and addressed complex emergencies. Over time the discussions have broadened in scope both "qualitatively" and "quantitatively" -- including such issues as post-conflict situations, respect for human rights, institution-building and democratization, economic reconstruction and development. Our number of participants has increased. Furthermore, to promote in-depth discussions among specialists, the idea of "target-oriented" meetings was introduced in recent years. Last year the Council of Europe hosted such a meeting on reform of the judiciary, and yesterday we convened a follow-up discussion on

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a complementary theme: law enforcement and in particular the police. The latter included a range of specialists from among our organizations as well as the Western European Union and the Policy Unit of the Council of the European Union. Under our tripartite umbrella, United Nations Special Envoy Mr. Carl Bildt convened an informal meeting of Balkans experts from organizations with the largest field presences to discuss challenges and immediate steps ahead.

The issues which bring us together in the tripartite framework have been both a source of hope and a cause for serious concern for many years. They affect the security in all its aspects, human rights, democratic, economic and social development not only of the peoples of Europe, but of the United Nations as a whole. Tremendous progress has been made during the last decade in many countries in transition, who are today members, or are on the way to becoming members, of the inter-governmental bodies whose Secretariats are gathered at this table. At the same time, several regions and sub-regions on this continent remain divided by bloodshed, oppression, displaced populations, and poverty. None of these are ingredients for stability, even less so for prosperity.

Our agenda is full. It would require days, not hours, to do justice to each topic. But this is not our purpose. Our objective is to keep each other informed, to point out difficulties, and above all to maximize in practical ways the potential for cooperation between our organizations. This meeting is really just a snapshot, a kind of "annual stock-taking", of a network of contacts and interactions that occur daily, at headquarters and in the field, at and between all levels of our Secretariats.

Ultimately we are guided by the mandates entrusted to us by our member states. The founding documents on which our institutions are based -- the United Nations, which this year turns 55, and whose General Assembly will mark the "Millennium" next fall; the Council of Europe, whose Committee of Ministers last year celebrated its 50th anniversary in Budapest; and the Conference (now Organization) for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which now approaches the quarter century mark and whose Istanbul Summit last November adopted the Charter for European Security -- all are inspired by the same principles and goals. Meetings such as ours are in the spirit of the decisions adopted by our governing bodies. Hopefully our deliberations today will contribute to the fourth meeting between the United Nations and Regional Organizations, to be convened by Secretary-General Kofi Annan at United Nations Headquarters next June.

The year since our last tripartite meeting has witnessed dramatic developments in South-Eastern Europe, the ramifications of which have absorbed much of the energy, resources and personnel of our organizations in the past months. The Stability Pact adopted by the Sarajevo Summit last July, came in the aftermath of the last Balkans war of the 20th century. In supporting this Pact -- whose Working Tables have just completed a second round of meetings -- our institutions are taking steps to ensure that the peoples of this region will never again in this new century be subjected to the horrors of the last.

All of our organizations have, in one way or another, been involved in this region since the early 1990s, and are likely to remain engaged there for years to come. Many of you are "veterans" of this area and its wars -- not least the United Nations officials on either side of me (Mr. Bildt and Mrs. Ogata). Today, more than ever before, and in novel ways, our institutions are implementing mandates alongside each other, in an effort to achieve the

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primary theme of today's meeting: "progress towards peace and stability in South-Eastern Europe". From a regional perspective, we are drawn together in diverse fora: the Stability Pact, the Peace Implementation Council, the SECI initiative, the Royaumont process and others. At the provincial and municipal level, we are bound even more closely, especially in Kosovo. We are also active in the neighbouring countries, where recent positive developments (such as the elections in Croatia) stand in contrast to the continuing difficult situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. There is much for us to discuss."

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United Nations Office at Geneva

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25 February 2000

HIGH-LEVEL "TRIPARTITE" MEETING DISCUSSES ENHANCED COOPERATION

High-level representatives of the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Geneva-based United Nations organizations met today for their annual informal tripartite meeting.

This meeting, chaired by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, was the ninth in a series of meetings initiated in July 1993. Tripartite meetings are intended to share information and improve practical cooperation by drawing on each other's expertise and know-how so as to complement efforts in areas of common concern. Over time their focus has widened in scope, from an essentially humanitarian emphasis, to diverse fields related to post-conflict situations. The number of participating organizations has increased. This year, for the first time, a representative of the European Commission attended the meeting, together with the traditional partners associated with this process, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Organization for Migration.

Participants exchanged information on recent high-level political meetings, including the Istanbul OSCE Summit of the Heads of State and Government, the 104th and 105th meetings of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers and the 54th United Nations General Assembly. Attention was drawn to the fourth meeting between the United Nations and Regional Organizations to be convened by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in June 2000.

The main focus of discussion was progress towards peace and stability in South-Eastern Europe. Participants reviewed their organizations' activities in support of the Stability Pact, and agreed on the need to improve coordination in respect of the Working Tables, where the comparative advantages of each organization should be maximized in order to avoid duplication of efforts. The outcome of the recent elections in Croatia was welcomed by the participants, who hoped that these would set a positive example for the forthcoming elections in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Concern was expressed over the situation in Kosovo, including Mitrovica. Support was expressed for the strenuous efforts of UNMIK and its four pillars, despite constraints imposed by lack of resources. Participants called on governments to fulfill their pledges in dispatching police as quickly as possible.

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Participants considered the outcome of the target-oriented meeting on law enforcement, in particular the police, convened by the United Nations Office at Geneva on 24 February. This expert-level meeting, which complemented the target-oriented meeting on reform of the judiciary convened in Strasbourg in February 1999, compared experiences and lessons learned in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo. Such meetings were considered as useful and should continue in the future.

Regarding electronic information exchange, it was agreed that efforts should continue to enhance direct contacts between practitioners and specialists within the different organizations, as presently compiled in the database located on UNOG's web server, while widening links between public web sites.

Participants also agreed to explore cooperation in the fields of research and training.

The next high-level tripartite meeting will be hosted in Vienna by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in February 2001.

The United Nations delegation included, in addition to the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the High Commissioner for Refugees, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Balkans and the Senior Adviser to the Emergency Relief Coordinator.

The Council of Europe delegation was led by the Secretary-General and included the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers' Deputies, the Chairman of the Rapporteur Group on relations between the Council of Europe and the OSCE, and the Director-General of Political Affairs.

The OSCE delegation was led by the Secretary-General and a Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office, and included the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC), the Director of the Office For Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and representatives of the High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM) and the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

The European Commission (EC) was represented by its Director for Multilateral Relations in the Directorate-General for External Relations. The Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Director-General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) were present. Representatives of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations also participated.

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United Nations

Press Release

Information Service

United Nations Office at Geneva

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24 February 2000

UNITED NATIONS, COUNCIL OF EUROPE, AND ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE TO DISCUSS PEACE AND STABILITY IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

High-level representatives of the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Geneva-based United Nations organizations will meet at the Palais des Nations on Friday, 25 February 2000, for an informal "tripartite" meeting.

The meeting, to be chaired by Vladimir Petrovsky, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, will be the ninth in a series of meetings initiated in July 1993. These tripartite meetings are intended to share information and improve practical cooperation by drawing on each other's expertise and competence so as to achieve a synergy of efforts in fields of common concern. Discussions will centre around progress towards peace and stability in South-Eastern Europe.

This year, for the first time, a representative of the European Commission will attend, together with the traditional partners in the informal "tripartite" process of consultations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Organization for Migration.

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