



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Statement by the OSCE Secretary General

World Humanitarian Summit

High-Level Leaders' Roundtable

Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflict

Istanbul, 23-24 May 2016

Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and privilege to represent the OSCE before this distinguished roundtable.

Early warning, conflict prevention and resolution stand at the core of the OSCE's mandate. From Nagorno-Karabakh to Eastern Ukraine, from Western Balkans to Central Asia, the OSCE is at the forefront of international efforts to address some of the most intractable conflicts in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space and ensure post-conflict peace and stability.

As the very nature of conflict becomes ever more complex, I see a need to move away from crisis management towards more effective early warning and conflict resolution. This will require a great deal of political will and commitment. From an OSCE perspective, regional organizations can play a critical supporting role in four areas:

First, regional arrangements have developed a wealth of local expertise and knowledge. They are well placed to sensitize the international community on emerging crises, and take concrete actions when there is agreement among the membership. In the OSCE we have set up a network of focal points in the field, assigning a central role to the Conflict Prevention Centre in collecting, analysing and assessing relevant early warning signals.

In my capacity, I will continue to bring to the attention of our membership any situation of emerging crises and suggest possible options for timely and effective response to escalating situations. I will also provide advice on the use of existing tools and to recommend the most appropriate one to a given emerging crisis.

Second, in light of this, we need to further strengthen conflict prevention and conflict resolution capacities of regional organizations. The OSCE has been steadfast in its commitment to develop a systematic mediation-support capacity in recent years. A Mediation Support Team similar to that of the UN is now fully operational. For instance, we have provided mediation support to our flagship operations in Ukraine through a national dialogue project and the Ukrainian-led national roundtables, mediation coaching as well as targeted support on cease-fire mediation.

Less visible to the public, but equally important, is the OSCE's work in facilitating dialogue at the local and national level – notably through the work of the High Commissioner of National Minorities. Quiet diplomacy efforts are critical to reducing tensions between groups, finding long-term solutions for conflicts before they escalate into violence.

Third: the role of regional organizations in addressing the structural root causes and preventing relapse into conflict is also of paramount importance. Our post-conflict rehabilitation efforts are comprehensive, systematic and sustainable. Thanks to our institutions and extensive network of field missions, we have systematically involved civil society and non-governmental entities in conflict resolution and peace building activities.

In the context of our work in a number of complex post-conflict situations, we will continue to make sure that our conflict resolution strategies take into account areas where civil-society actors and “peace constituents”, including women, youth, and faith-based groups, may best contribute possible solutions through localized approaches.

And finally, effective conflict prevention and resolution requires building strong coalitions among relevant actors within the international community and developing public-private partnerships. Chapter VIII of the UN Charter provides the appropriate framework for cooperation between the UN and regional organizations, allowing them to prevent and address regional conflicts in a complementary and mutually reinforcing manner.

During my tenure in office I have advocated for the establishment of a co-ordination mechanism for international organizations at the Secretariat level as a means to operationalize co-operation, including in the field of conflict prevention and resolution. In this context, I am glad to voice my support for the UN initiative to convene a “World Prevention Forum” by 2020 aimed at identifying how the international community can work more effectively together by capturing, consolidating and sharing good practices and lessons learned.

I hope that the Agenda for Humanity will succeed in galvanizing political will to shift the current paradigm of conflict prevention and resolution. The OSCE will do its fair share.

Thank you