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**STATEMENT BY H.E. HAROLDO RODAS MELGAR, MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GUATEMALA**

SECURITY COUNCIL

**Debate on Enhancing the United Nations-African Union
Strategic Relationship**

(12 January 2012)

Mr. President,

We thank your Government for having organized this timely debate, as well as for the concept paper circulated among us. We very much appreciate your personal presence in this gathering, which undoubtedly adds to its relevance. We also value the presence of the senior officials of the five sub-regional African institutions that have joined us, and thank the Chairperson of the Commission on the Partnership between the AU and the UN on Peace and Security for having shared his Report with us. We also sincerely appreciate the Secretary-General's complete and illuminating report on the same topic.

Mr. President,

This is a very special occasion for me, I would even say an emotional one, since this is our first participation in a debate of the Security Council since we took our place as an elected member last week, and it takes place two days

before the present Administration relinquishes power to the new Government elected by popular vote last November. In other words, this week is of special relevance for our history of democratic consolidation at the national level, and also for our presence at the United Nations, with our first-ever membership in this body. I am therefore gratified at the opportunity to be present on this occasion.

It might be argued that Guatemala has little to offer in a debate on the strategic partnership between the Security Council and the African Union, since we do not belong to the latter, but this is not the case. On the contrary, this debate is very pertinent for us, since regional cooperation is one of the pillars of our foreign policy. For sixty years now, our sub-region, Central America, has been a pioneer in promoting a wide and deep integration process, which partially explains the high value we place on regionalism in all its manifestations. The support we offered to the recent creation of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC, for its Spanish acronym) is one more example of this vocation. The expression of this policy in the context of the United Nations is found, in the area of peace and security, in Chapter VIII of the Charter, which covers the compatibility between the work of the Security Council and regional organizations. Indeed, we have witnessed the growing link between the Council and regional entities in the resolutions adopted by this organ recently, where the African Union certainly plays a prominent role, together with other regional economic communities, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), as well as the Arab League.

The link between the Security Council and regional entities is not limited to preventive actions and mediation such as those contemplated in article 52 of the Charter or coercive measures contemplated in article 53, but increasingly, as the Report of the Secretary-General reminds us, those entities participate in peacekeeping operations and, by extension, in peace building activities. In both endeavors, we feel a community of interests with our colleagues of the African Continent, in our double capacity as a troop-contributing country and a country

that experienced a post conflict situation with very unique experiences of peace building on the heels of the signing of our own peace accords at the end of 1996.

Judging from the Concept Note circulated by the Presidency and the Report of the Secretary-General, much has been achieved in partnering the Security Council with the African Union – the latter, through the African Peace and Security Architecture – since the Security Council adopted resolutions 1625 (2005) and 1809 (2008). At the same time, we take the point made in the Concept Note that there still remains much to be done, especially in the area of mediation and conflict prevention. To the degree that concrete proposals emerge to strengthen the link between both institutions, my delegation will consider them with a positive inclination. We also are well aware – and the Secretary-General’s Report makes the point – that cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union has at times faced divergent positions on particular issues, which should not come as a surprise to us. The same can be said for different points of view regarding complementarities and burden sharing. However, we get the impression that the consensus-building mechanisms between both parties that have already been put in place should facilitate resolving those issues.

In more general terms, we believe that the partnership between the Security Council and regional institutions in the area of peace and security contains the conceptual underpinnings of a productive relationship based on the clear comparative advantages derived from the Council’s mandate to maintain international peace and security and the greater knowledge and identification that regional institutions tend to have regarding their own member countries. That is why we applaud the growing tendency of the Council – discreet, in some cases, and explicit in others – to follow the guidance offered by the regional entities, in contrast to the possible temptation to try and dictate without consultations the path to follow from the confines of this august hall. Perhaps the best examples of the results of this cooperation are the hybrid operation between the African Union and the United Nations in Darfur (UNAMID), as well as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

We also note that progress in the area of cooperation has taken place both at the level of the Secretariats of the United Nations and the African Union as well as at the inter-governmental machinery. We find that the yearly gatherings of our Security Council with the African Union Peace and Security Council are of particular interest. We also applaud the establishment in 2010 of the United Nations Office to the African Union, which should further coherence in the relations between both entities.

Naturally, cooperation between the United Nations and regional institutions goes well beyond the mandates of the Security Council. As is well known, there are several agreements between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of development cooperation, all under the umbrella of the framework agreement signed in 2006 between them which contain a ten-year capacity-building programme which is not limited to the peace and security cluster. We naturally support cooperation in the area of development, in the spirit of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. This, too, can be perceived as a conflict-prevention activity, under the broader aegis of the General Assembly.

In summary, Guatemala, in its multilateral vocation, has always been partial to combining the presence of the United Nations with that of regional and sub-regional institutions. This is valid for development cooperation, and also for the maintenance of international peace and security, humanitarian assistance and the promotion of human rights. It is valid for our own Continent – Latin America and the Caribbean – and there is no reason to doubt that this also is the case for Africa, where the African Union and a host of sub regional institutions have a solid and proven track record of achievements. In this latter instance, South Africa has played a leading role, which merits our recognition.

Thank you.