

KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Speech by

Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve,
Permanent Representative
of Belgium to the United Nations

**Briefing on the Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional
and Sub-regional Organizations: League of Arab States**

New York, 13/06/2019

Mr President,

I would like to thank the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio GUTERRES, as well as the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Ahmed ABOUL-GHEIT for their presence and their informative briefings.

Regional cooperation is one of the pillars of Belgium's foreign policy. We therefore welcome this opportunity to discuss, within this Council, cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States. In the same spirit, the European Union met with the League of Arab States last February.

Mr President,

The Arab world is currently facing a number of challenges, ranging from the conflicts that are ravaging some of its countries - to thematic challenges, such as the preservation and management of water resources.

The conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Libya, as well as the stagnation in the Middle East peace process, are significantly destabilising the region, seriously stoking tensions between its states and endangering its security. Due to their international nature, these conflicts also endanger global peace and security, for which this Council is the guarantor.

The region is stronger when it speaks with one voice. The widespread support of the region for UNRWA is a good example of this, as is the support in the Arab world for maintaining the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Given the seriousness and the complex and multidimensional nature of the challenges that we face, strengthening dialogue and collaboration, both within the League of Arab States and between the League of Arab States and this Council, are of crucial importance. We therefore support the request for regular meetings to be held between the Security Council and the League of Arab States, as is the case with other regional organisations, such as the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU).

Mr President,

Belgium has made conflict prevention one of its priorities. As underscored by the Secretary-General in his report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organisations (S/2018/592), the latter have a key role to play in conflict prevention, which is also the case for the League of Arab States.

Belgium supports efforts aimed at strengthening this dimension. A joint analysis, as well as joint early warning mechanisms, are essential elements in this regard. In this context, we welcome the announcement of the opening of a UN liaison office with the League of Arab States in Cairo towards the end of this month.

Mr President,

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States must also be guided by the 2030 Agenda. The root causes, such as socio-economic inequalities, must be addressed without delay. However, respect for human rights, inclusive governance and the rule of law, must also be the guiding theme of this cooperation. It is essential to ensure the meaningful participation of women and young people.

Mr President,

Belgium will continue to give its full support to strengthening and deepening the existing synergies between the United Nations and the League of Arab States, with the common goal of contributing to stability and the search for peace, as well as the promotion of multilateralism and a global rules-based order.

Thank you.