



# UNECE Weekly

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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## *It's just happened ...*

### **"NEW CHALLENGES TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY, INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM"**

**5<sup>th</sup> High level Meeting between the United Nations and Regional Organizations, 29–30 July 2003**

Yearly consultations between the United Nations and regional organizations are organized by the Secretary-General to strengthen cooperation and improve responsiveness and 'early warning' to threats to peace and security. These regular consultations have led to an agreement on a 'framework for cooperation in peace-building' which has successfully identified many practical measures for cooperation between the UN and other agencies. At the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, chaired by the Secretary-General, the regional commissions were represented by Ms. Brigita Schmögnerová, Executive Secretary of UNECE. The main purposes

of the meeting were to identify the new threats to international peace and security facing the world today, including from international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, proliferation of small arms, organized crime, etc. and in the light of these threats to identify new cooperation methods and innovative approaches in building peace and security. Candid views were expressed over sensitive issues, for example the threats posed from the 'clash of civilizations'; the tendency in the mass media to identify terrorism with specific religions; and the risk of undermining human rights in the fight against terrorism.

#### *Key features of the meeting*

The key messages which emerged from these discussions were: *The need to strengthen the multilateral approach:* Participants argued that the UN must retain its role as the main coordinating body in the fight against terrorism and that 'go it alone' policies – the use of force without the authority of the Security Council – should be discouraged. *An integrated approach is required to deal with today's threats:* What is new is the way the threats converge into global threats comprising

*inter alia*, political, human rights and economic aspects; regional and international organizations could have a major impact on dealing with these threats by working together. *The importance of strengthening commitments in the fight against terrorism:* Evidence suggests that the national resolve to fight terrorism – very strong in the immediate aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup> – was apparently waning and international collaboration in the fight against terrorism was slipping.

#### *The Importance of economic aspects in building peace and security*

The links between development and security were emphasized; poverty and deprivation were the seeds of violence and conflicts. The need to strengthen cooperation between the Security Council and ECOSOC was stressed as well as the importance of regional cooperation. Along these lines H.E. Gert Rosenthal, Chairman of ECOSOC, reaffirmed the importance of the regional economic

commissions in security matters and argued that the potential of the regional economic commissions in peace building and security had not been "fully taken advantage of". He referred also to the need to build up a better functional relationship with the Security Council. The Secretary General of NATO, Lord Robertson, said that economic cooperation in south-east Europe had been a positive stimulus to building peace.

### Recommendations and follow-up

There was a consensus amongst the participants that poverty and deprivation continued to constitute 'equally important threats that could not be considered of a lesser priority... and peace-building activities should be accorded the highest priority', also that the economic aspects are important in addressing the new threats to peace and security. The main emphasis in the

recommendations was on the importance of protecting human rights and intercultural dialogue, and for logistical support for the consultations, notably to create a focal point for the exchange of information and follow-up the decisions taken at high-level meetings and to establish a coordination centre/informal advisory council, at a high or working-level, between the UN and regional organizations

### Seminar on New Strategy for Enhancing Security in the Economic and Environmental Dimensions

The seminar, held in Villars, Switzerland on 7-8 July, was organized by **UNECE in cooperation with OSCE** in order to help identify the key threats to security in the economic and environmental dimension and to assist OSCE Member States in preparing their New Strategy Document. High-level experts from NATO, Council of Europe, European Commission and international academic institutions dealing with security and conflict prevention attended the seminar. Threats to security were discussed under four headings: socio-economic issues, energy and environmental issues, institutional framework, and globalisation and/or regional economic cooperation. For each of these areas, the nature of the security threat was identified, actions needed to eliminate it were analysed, and obstacles which might impede effective action were discussed.

The key security threats – that could escalate tensions and the threat of regional conflict – were identified: In the *socio-economic area*: Rapid social marginalisation characterized by extreme inequality and widespread poverty, and excessive migration, which could lead to human trafficking, crime and brain drain. In the *environmental sphere*: Mismanagement of benefits of natural resources, and environmental degradation, which could escalate tensions between countries and communities over access to scarce resources. With regard to *institutions*: Inadequate corporate governance structures; crime and corruption, and lack of national security strategies, which could undermine efforts to meet the new security challenges of international terrorism. Concerning globalisation and regional cooperation: External shocks – financial account liberalisation could make States vulnerable to financial instability, which had the potential capacity to destabilise societies and fuel inter-ethnic tensions.

Participants reaffirmed the role of successful environmental management and of sustainable economic growth in helping to prevent conflicts both within and among countries. The need for strong regional development policies and international cooperation and assistance was emphasized, as were developing the rule of law, an independent and effective judiciary, accountability, political stability, controlling corruption and preventing organized crime and its related infrastructure, including the black economy, money laundering, trafficking in human beings and in small arms. Policy action was urged

to encourage Member States to develop coherent national security strategies for the economic dimension of security. International Policy action was needed to coordinate worldwide efforts by governments, international organisations and civil society to develop and implement adequate financial markets regulation and to consolidate financial stability. Weak economic growth, lack of cooperation, and ineffectual laws that were inadequate in fighting economic crime were perceived to be among the obstacles which might impede action.

### Facts and figures:

#### Regular daily smokers, 15 years and over

*selected UNECE countries*

	Year	Percentage	
		Women	Men
<b>Central and Eastern Europe:</b>			
Albania	2000	18.0	60.0
Bulgaria	2001	29.8	51.7
Croatia	2000	26.6	34.1
Czech Republic	2000	17.3	29.7
Estonia	2000	25.7	50.6
Hungary	2000	30.4	53.1
Latvia	2000	18.2	51.3
Lithuania	2000	15.8	51.5
Poland	1996	19.4	40.9
Romania	2000	10.1	32.3
Slovakia	1998	14.7	44.1
Slovenia	2001	20.1	28.0
<b>Commonwealth of Independent States:</b>			
Azerbaijan	1998	1.1	30.2
Belarus	2001	6.3	53.3
Kazakhstan	1996	7.0	60.0
Kyrgyzstan	1999	12.0	60.0
Republic of Moldova	2001	2.0	38.8
Russian Federation	1998	9.7	63.2
Turkmenistan	1992	0.5	26.6
Uzbekistan	1989	1.0	40.0
<b>Other member countries:</b>			
Israel	2000	15.4	34.0

Sources: UNECE Statistical Division, based on data from the Health For All database, WHO Regional Office for Europe.

**For further information please contact:**

**Information Service  
UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)  
CH - 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland**

**Tel: +41(0)22 917 44 44 Fax: +41(0)22 917 05 05**

**E-mail: [info.ece@unece.org](mailto:info.ece@unece.org) Web site:**

**<http://www.unece.org>**

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