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***Statement by Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. Permanent Representative, in the Open Debate on Strengthening the Relationship Between the UN and Regional Organizations, in the Security Council, April 16, 2008***

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Thank you Mr. President.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies,

I would like to thank President Mbeki for convening this important meeting.

Mr. President,

President Bush noted upon his return from a recent trip to Africa that there have been striking changes in Africa which are the result of a new generation of African leaders.

The United States supports democratic transitions and economic development in African countries—working in particular in post-conflict situations to strengthen democratic institutions; and across Africa assisting civil society organizations in combating gender-based violence, trafficking in persons, and other human rights violations.

Despite substantial improvements, we face enormous challenges. The focus of today’s discussion is on how this Council can cooperate and enhance its relationship with the Continent’s regional organizations, particularly, the African Union (AU).

As we all know, UN peacekeeping is overstretched. The supply of well-equipped peacekeepers does not meet demand. We must find ways to use existing resources effectively and efficiently and build capacity -- particularly regional capacity -- to do more. This will take time -- so we must look at both short-term and longer-term solutions. With that in mind, I would like to make five points.

**First, the United Nations Security Council needs to reassess how we plan for and sustain peacekeeping operations.** Our peacekeeping operations should be “goal-oriented” in nature, and clearly defined missions, timelines and budgets. Peacekeeping operations should be a means to an end, rather than a substitute for resolving conflicts or an excuse for delay. While we understand the risks of leaving too soon, we should look to terminate nonviable peacekeeping operations. The goal must be to encourage self-reliance and free up forces and funds for where they are needed most -- places like Darfur, where the UN is collaborating with the African Union to address a dire regional crisis.

On the subject of Darfur -- the UN and AU have embarked on a historic cooperative effort -- the

deployment of the UN/AU hybrid force UNAMID. Although it's much too early to judge whether that cooperation has been successful, the early results suggest that UNAMID will not become a model to be followed in other places of shared UN/AU concerns. The U.S. continues to call for the immediate and full deployment of UNAMID, both to improve the situation on the ground in Darfur and to demonstrate that the AU and UN can form formidable partnerships. The Government of Sudan must lift all restrictions and delays to allow for all UNAMID troops and equipment to be deployed.

**Second, the AU must enhance its capacity to plan and execute viable peacekeeping operations and we should help.**

As we all know, the African Union, needs to build increased administrative, logistical, and military planning capacities as well as better financial accountability and transparency. To that end, the U.S. has substantial programs to assist these efforts. We have provided significant support in the form of logistical support and technical expertise to the African Standby Force, to the AU Commission's emerging Strategic Planning and Management Unit, and to the AU's Situation Room. And the U.S. continues to provide significant logistical capability in support of both UN and AU peacekeeping efforts in Africa. We are prepared to work with the AU and other regional organizations to further enhance their capacity and we call on all countries to step up their bilateral support as well. The UN should prioritize its efforts to help the AU deal with its deficits in financial management and administrative capacities. Improvement in this area will undoubtedly help donor countries feel more comfortable in giving resources to AU missions such as AMISOM.

The United States would like to recognize AU's efforts to stabilize and improve the security situation in Somalia. Over the last two years the United States has provided over \$57 million to support AMISOM and we continue to seek additional resources to support this critical effort. We call on all AU member states to send forces for this important mission and we call on the international community to donate generously so that AMISOM can fully deploy. In addition to AMISOM, we support the Secretary-General's call for a credible political process and security presence, which the United States believes should lead to a UN peacekeeping operation.

**Third, we must work with the AU member states to increase their national peacekeeping capacity.** The United States is committed to helping African states increase their capacity. Since 2005, the United States has trained over 34,000 African peacekeepers from 19 countries and has provided \$375 million to increase global capacity for peacekeeping operations in Africa and elsewhere. Additionally, we see an opportunity for several African countries to increase their capacity for combined and joint operations by stressing interoperability in equipment, training, and communications and building professional relationships among officers of all African nations. Steps such as these will enhance overall AU peacekeeping capacity and will be a focus for the new US-African command (AFRICOM).

**Fourth, funding for AU peacekeeping capacities is important.** The United States is well aware of the financial shortfalls the AU faces, especially in peacekeeping missions. We welcome the exploration of realistic ways to address the financing challenges faced by regional peacekeeping missions. In this regard, we support the Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment of a panel of distinguished persons from the African Union, the United Nations, and other relevant stakeholders to seek viable alternative, cost-effective means of financial support, such as the establishment of a trust fund or enhanced donor coordination.

**Fifth, closer UN-AU cooperation.** In the realm of peace and security, we applaud the formation of the UNDPKO-AU Peace Support Team and its work in the areas of mission planning and the management of logistics and resources. In the area of conflict prevention and mediation, the United States is encouraged by the efforts currently underway by the Department of Political Affairs to strengthen AU

conflict prevention and mitigation capabilities. On humanitarian action, the United States appreciates the Secretary General's recommendations of enhancing the AU's early warning systems through the development of a multi-risk early warning tool that includes socio-political, natural, human-made, and economic vulnerabilities.

Such a system would have been particularly useful in places like Zimbabwe. The United States remains extremely concerned about the situation there. Despite significant pre-election irregularities, the people of Zimbabwe expressed their will during the March 29 elections. It has been 18 days since the election and the results of the Presidential race still have not been announced. However, based on publicly-posted results, it is clear that the people of Zimbabwe voted overwhelmingly for change. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission needs to immediately release the presidential election results and ensure their veracity in a transparent manner. We are gravely concerned about the escalating politically-motivated violence perpetrated by security forces and ruling party militias that target opposition supporters in rural areas. The government and its supporters must desist immediately from violence and intimidation, act with restraint, respect human rights, and allow the electoral process to continue unfettered. We commend the Southern African Development Community (SADC) efforts to urge the Zimbabwean government and electoral authorities to address the unfolding crisis.

The time has come for the United Nations to support their efforts through a joint mission with the African Union to ensure that the electoral authorities act in conformity with the regional organization's principles for democratic elections, the political violence ceases, and the will of the Zimbabwean people is upheld. In this regard, we welcome and support the Secretary-General's call for international observers.

Finally, once again I would like to thank President Mbeki for his leadership in convening this important meeting. We understand and appreciate South Africa's interest in keeping the United Nations Security Council attention focused on Africa and in developing a more effective working relationship between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union.

Thank you Mr. President.