



The emergence of increasingly complex, transnational and interconnected threats to security means the OSCE must look for ways to adapt its peace operations and its whole conflict-cycle toolbox, said OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Serbia's Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić on Thursday at the start of a Ministerial event on the margins of the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The event was organized by Serbia's 2015 OSCE Chairmanship to assess major policy and strategy challenges faced by the Organization's peace operations and to promote dialogue on the way forward among the Organization's 57 participating States.

As the world's largest regional security arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, offering a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach, the OSCE was uniquely placed to contribute to the peaceful settlement of disputes, Dačić said.

"The OSCE's response to the crisis in and around Ukraine has demonstrated the Organization's relevance in crisis management and conflict resolution, including its capacity to react quickly and to deliver on the ground," he said. "The OSCE is currently looking at ways to increase its capacity to launch and sustain complex peace operations of an essentially civilian nature. Such operations would be equipped with tailored assets and resources and could be deployed in different phases of the conflict cycle."

Dačić also welcomed the fresh impetus given to the debate on peace operations by the United Nations' ongoing Peace Operations Review and the report of the High-Level Panel on Peace Operations.

The event's keynote speech was delivered by Swiss Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter, in his capacity as member of the OSCE Ministerial Troika and the previous Chairperson-in-Office.

"One of the great assets of the OSCE is its ability to harness a vast range of expertise through seconded or contracted civilian mission members. The challenges lie beyond the individual expert level, however. They concern the operational capacity deficits," Burkhalter said.

"The OSCE must adapt to today's needs for effective peace operations. It needs more planning resources. We should look at ways of permitting more robust capabilities to be included in OSCE missions – as well as at the political, financial and legal implications of this," stated the

Swiss minister, concluding by making the case for a strong OSCE partnership with the UN in this field.

"It seems realistic that the UN will increasingly look to regional organizations to share the burden of resolving conflicts and promoting peace. It is our responsibility to ensure that the OSCE is ready to play its part."

OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier moderated the discussions.

"The nature of the challenges facing us today requires stronger institutional capacity for the OSCE, so I welcome today's debate among our participating States on how to strengthen the OSCE's ability to conduct peace operations," said Zannier. "I also appreciate the support of the UN for strengthening our cooperation under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter."

*Photo by:OSCE/Micky Kroell*