

pragmatic look at current regional trends at ground level. For instance, despite what is authorized by the UN Charter, we know - and the UN acknowledges - that very few regional organizations can generate strong action-oriented mandates in the peace and security field or are appropriately equipped to carry out effective peacekeeping or enforcement operations. We also know that this situation is unlikely to change in the near future. Yet three years after the publication of the original *Agenda*, discussions about Chapter VIII, global governance and subsidiarity are still replete with generic notions of what regional organizations should be able to accomplish in the field of conflict management. Not only do current trends indicate that under present institutional and political circumstances it might be unrealistic to expect regional organizations to function as the drafters of the Charter expected it, but there are also indications that there might be unexploited or misunderstood facets of the 'regional option' which need to be examined more carefully.

What, then, are the difficulties associated with regional approaches to conflict management, and what are some of the options available to the international community in trying to enhance the role of regional bodies? This paper examines where regional groupings have been effective in addressing conflict and where they have not, and offers a few observations about some of the outstanding issues concerning regional approaches to conflict management.

1. Regional successes, regional failures

The following examples illustrate some of the recent successes and achievements of regional approaches to conflict management:

- In Latvia and Estonia the OSCE is playing an essential role in helping to manage the delicate citizenship issue through its High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM) and long term missions on the ground. Its continued involvement in other issues, some of them military-related, is contributing to the stabilisation of Baltics-Russia relations and reducing tensions in the region.
- During the Congo's 1993 political crisis, OAU mediation paid off and an escalation of tensions was averted between government and opposition. Similarly, the OAU played an important third party mediation role during the Nigeria-Cameroon 1994 border dispute;
- In Lesotho an ad hoc regional group consisting of Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa, with British, EU and American support, helped restore constitutional rule after the August 1994 coup. It should be noted here that a credible threat of external military intervention played a role in King Letsie III's decisions to restore