

inappropriate forum to address the issue. An *ad hoc* multilateral process was adopted by the parties as a better, more flexible solution.

Another limiting factor for regional bodies is that there is often little or poor coordination between them and non-political regional or international bodies such as international or regional financial institutions, humanitarian agencies and NGO's. This is especially true of regional organizations in the developing world. Often this poses severe limitations on the regional organization's ability to manage certain situations, notably complex humanitarian crises which require rapid mobilization of resources and capital on short notice.

Experience has demonstrated that in many cases where the UN and regional organizations are working together (e.g. Haiti, Burundi), the UN will overshadow the role played by the regional body. More often than not, belligerents regard the UN as the organization which carries more political weight and that acts more neutrally and legitimately. Far from being a drawback, this can sometimes be turned to an advantage. Regional bodies can use such situations to develop function-specific niches (e.g. elections monitoring, human rights observation) and acquire experience in the peace and security field which in the longer- term will increase an organization's potential. In Haiti, this is exactly what the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is now doing. It has contributed a contingent to UNMIH II and has been given responsibility for an entire sector while remaining under overall UN command.

It is uncertain, however, whether all regional organizations can play a leading role in the post-conflict phase, as it is sometimes claimed. Some regional organizations and bodies have strengths and capabilities in areas such as human rights and election monitoring which can directly contribute to the strengthening of civil society and democracy. But one of the major impediments to their greater and more effective role in the post-conflict reconstruction of societies and countries is the weakness of the financial and economic instruments at their disposal. The development of more responsive institutions and better coordination among regional bodies, the UN and the donor community (including international financial institutions) will remain vital in that respect. Another major difficulty often lies with the relatively short attention span regional bodies can effectively dedicate to one particular problem once the violent manifestations of conflict have abated. Burdened as it is by countless urgent situations, the OAU, for example, can ill afford to 'walk, talk and chew gum' at the same time. It can, at best, focus simultaneously on very few problems.

There is a small but very significant statement in the *Supplement to the Agenda for Peace* on this important issue. In the *Supplement*, the UN Secretariat has identified 5 areas where regional organizations of all types and the UN can work together, thereby broadening