



Security Council

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Letter dated 18 June 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the 8,798th meeting of the Security Council convened on 16 June 2021 under the agenda item entitled “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council ([S/2017/507](#)): working methods”. The interventions of the briefers and those of Council members will be published as an official record of the Council ([S/PV.8798](#)).

In accordance with the understanding reached among Security Council members for the 8,798th meeting, the following delegations submitted written statements, copies of which are enclosed: Argentina, Austria, Bahrain, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates. These statements will be issued as a document of the Council in accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 ([S/2020/372](#)) by the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of members of the Council, which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and reference to the document will be made in [S/PV.8798](#).

(Signed) **Sven Jürgenson**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Argentine Republic to the United Nations, Maria del Carmen Squeff**

[Original: Spanish]

The Member States of the United Nations, through the Charter of the United Nations, have entrusted to the Security Council the principal responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and have agreed that the Security Council shall act on behalf of the membership as a whole in carrying out its duties. Therefore, a Security Council that is efficient, transparent and inclusive is essential. And in meeting that commitment, the working methods of the Security Council play a critical role.

In this context, the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly takes on special importance. The submission of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly is one of the many interactions between the two bodies. This report should be sent in a timely manner so that it can be given serious consideration by the General Assembly. We regret that the content of the annual report – despite successive requests by the Member States – continues to be merely a factual description of the meetings and documents of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, without containing an analysis that would allow the membership as a whole to conduct a complete evaluation of its activities. We urge the members of the Council to revise this practice.

As part of the transparency and inclusion that should guide the work of the Council, as prescribed in the Charter, the participation of States who are not members of the Security Council involved in a situation that the Council is considering should be guaranteed.

The Security Council adapted some of its working methods during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. While these adaptations were able to guarantee its operations during the limitations on in-person meetings at United Nations Headquarters, they had a negative impact on transparency and inclusivity.

The open debates offered a valuable opportunity for non-member States of the Council to present their point of view and contribute to the subject. The videoconference modality that was implemented from March 2020 enabled this type of debate to continue during the pandemic. However, in practice, the contribution of States that were not members of the Council was lost as they did not have the possibility of participating effectively, since their interventions were reduced to a written compilation that was distributed later.

The pandemic has demonstrated the necessity and value of in-person diplomacy. For this reason, and in view of the growing improvement in the health conditions in New York City, we advocate for a return to normal operations by the Security Council. The Council should return to in-person meetings as soon as possible.

Argentina notes that during 2020, successive presidencies of the Security Council have maintained the practice of holding informational meetings for the membership as a whole at the beginning and at the end of their mandate. We therefore encourage the Presidencies of the Council to conduct their monthly evaluations on time and to give them the serious consideration they deserve.

In conclusion, Argentina reiterates its commitment to the achievement of Security Council reform, with the goal of attaining a body that is more democratic, transparent, inclusive and representative, reached with the greatest possible level of consensus among Member States.

Argentina supports a reform of the Security Council that also includes its working methods, its relationship with the General Assembly and accountability to all Member States of the United Nations.

Annex II

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations, Alexander Marschik

I would like to thank Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, for her important work as the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

Moreover, we would like to thank the current Council presidency, Estonia, for organizing this open debate and circulating – together with the presidencies of European Union member States France and Ireland, the presidencies in July and September respectively – a voluntary commitment to best practices concerning working methods during their presidencies.

The Security Council bears the responsibility for upholding international peace and security. Agility and innovation in times of crises are therefore absolutely necessary. The coronavirus disease (COVID) pandemic is a crisis that none of us were appropriately prepared for; therefore, it is even more important to adapt certain working methods to ensure a smooth reaction in the future.

Lessons learned: as laid out in the concept note, owing to COVID-19-related restrictions, the wider membership of the United Nations is not able to participate in person in today's open debate. This leads to a significant lack of inclusion and interaction between the Council and the wider membership. Therefore, we hope that, as soon as the health- and safety-related circumstances allow, non-Council members will be able to participate in open debates physically at United Nations Headquarters again.

Innovations: some of the newly adopted practices should be upheld in the future. This includes the circulation of a compilation of briefings and statements after Security Council meetings. However, there is still room for improvement regarding certain issues: we regret that virtual meetings of the Council are still considered informal meetings. Consequently, informal meetings are not reflected in the Journal of the United Nations, adding to the lack of transparency vis-à-vis the wider United Nations membership and the general public. A lack of official records might have unintended long-term consequences; we therefore appeal to Council members to address this issue. What is more, Council members might wish to address the issue of electronic voting for future situations that do not allow for in-person voting.

Public versus closed meetings: while the merit of private conversations in diplomacy cannot be underestimated, as a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, Austria supports all efforts to enhance the inclusion and transparency of the Security Council towards the wider membership and the public.

Lastly, I would like to address one additional issue that is of great importance for Austria as a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group. We would like to sincerely thank Security Council members for organizing monthly briefings on the programme of work at the beginning of the month, as well as wrap-up meetings at the end of the month. Including the latter meetings in the programme of work at the time of its adoption is highly encouraged. While we are grateful that these meetings have become a widely established monthly practice, we believe that there is considerable room for improvement to render these meetings more efficient and substantial. To this end, the Group will present a non-paper with proposals on the conduct of wrap-up sessions in due course.

While extraordinary circumstances require extraordinary measures, we sincerely hope that we will soon be able to participate in meetings like today's open debate – but also during other meetings, such as informal Arrria-formula meetings – physically, at Headquarters. While the Council bears the responsibility for upholding international peace and security, the wider United Nations Membership bears the responsibility for enabling the conduct of effective multilateralism, including the adherence to international law and the rule of law. Austria stands ready to promote these rules and values, including as a candidate for the Security Council for the period 2027–2028.

Annex III**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations, Jamal Fares Alrowaiei**

[Original: Arabic]

It is my pleasure to thank the delegation of the Republic of Estonia, president of the Security Council for the month of June 2021, and the delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, which is serving as chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, for convening this important session to consider how future working methods might be developed to enable the Council to continue working in the optimum manner under all conditions and emergencies, more than a year after the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

I should also like to thank Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, as well as the briefers for their valuable inputs.

The issue of the development of the Security Council's working methods is of the utmost importance, given that the Council is the principal world body concerned with the maintenance of international peace and security, requiring it to play a concrete role in all circumstances and at all times. In this context, we appreciate the efforts of successive presidencies since the outbreak of the pandemic crisis, which have enabled the Council to continue to carry out its responsibilities in innovative ways, particularly with regard to remote voting, which has helped a number of resolutions vital to the maintenance of international peace and security get adopted.

We also commend the efforts of former chairs of the Informal Working Group. These have contributed to the adoption of numerous important resolutions relating to the working methods of the Council, designed to promote efficiency and transparency and develop ways of addressing important issues, the most significant being note [S/2017/507](#) (revised). Furthermore, I must not forget to express our appreciation for the constructive efforts of the State of Kuwait, the former chair, in this regard.

The pandemic has demonstrated that the international community as a whole, and not least the Security Council, needs to formulate clear working methods that take into account all circumstances, particularly those where it is not possible to meet in person. The innovative working methods adopted by the Council have revealed a number of opportunities that could form the basis for future meetings.

The experience the Council has gained during the pandemic could help enrich consultations by making them more substantive and interactive, as well as by increasing the participation of non-Member States in Council business, when required, in accordance with articles 31 and 32 of the Charter. In this regard, we should like to point out that virtual meetings have allowed high-level and expert participation from around the world to take place. The Council might consider developing virtual participation in the future.

We should also like to point out that, while Member States are expected to implement the numerous recommendations of the Security Council's subsidiary bodies, as well as being required to implement Security Council resolutions, it is of the utmost importance that the chairs of subsidiary bodies, including the chairs of the sanctions committees, give regular briefings on their activities to all Member States, when required, taking care to publish the times of these sessions in timely fashion. Furthermore, the experience of working virtually could be used to increase interaction between Security Council bodies and committees and United Nations Member States.

In conclusion, Mr President, we look forward to continuing to hold regular meetings on developing the Council's working methods. It is a subject that concerns all those Member States that seek to ensure that the Council operates as efficiently as possible and that its working methods keep pace with ongoing change. These sessions provide an opportunity to review progress achieved, study lines of development and listen to different views and opinions on ways of dealing with change.

Annex IV

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations

We thank the Permanent Missions of Estonia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for preparing the concept note for this open debate and for inviting Member States to provide their perspectives on the implementation of presidential note 507 (S/2021/507).

As a newly elected member of the Security Council for the 2022–2023 mandate, Brazil reaffirms its commitment to work towards a more open, transparent, accountable and inclusive body. Today's debate will certainly help us to identify priority issues and gather concrete suggestions that could help our efforts in this regard.

We are grateful for the briefings provided by Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters; by Loraine Sievers, a well-known expert on the working methods; and by Karen Landgren, the Executive Director of Security Council Report.

Last year, following the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Security Council gave tangible demonstrations of its ability to swiftly adapt to challenging circumstances and carry on its activities even when in-person meetings were not viable. This flexibility to adopt temporary working methods, making ample use of digital resources whenever possible, set a positive example that, even during extraordinary times, the United Nations system should not stop.

A few of those exceptional practices may even be retained for the future. The use of videoconferences has advanced closer contact with people on the ground and helped to bring different voices to the body. It has also shown its value in dealing with more urgent matters. Much-needed technical advancements came out of this experience, including the possibility of the simultaneous interpretation of virtual meetings. Actually, many of those advancements were already making headway before, and the pandemic sped up efforts on their implementation.

On the other hand, the virtual work has also worsened the well-known opacity of some of the Council's activities. It goes without saying that the end result – the adoption of a resolution, for example – is as important as the transparency of the deliberations that led to it. Member States should be entitled not only to see the results of a vote but also to understand the dynamics behind the decisions. Unfortunately, the pandemic resulted in less circulation of information. One clear example of that is the absence of formal records of the meetings held during this period. Even though we appreciate the fact the videoconference recordings have been made available on the Security Council website, the fact of the matter is that easy and full access to the discussions has been hampered. In the same vein, access to subsidiary bodies, which was already difficult in normal circumstances, became even more daunting during the pandemic.

We should also pay attention to the need to keep the playing field as level as possible. When it comes to activities based heavily on virtual platforms, some delegations will have better resources than others, generating or worsening inequalities relating to following or participating in negotiating processes as well as to getting timely instructions from their capitals. In short, the current practices cannot be an excuse to create an environment in which many delegations will be unable to engage in substantive discussions or in a decision-making process based on a silence procedure of a few days, if not hours.

It is also our hope that the practice of organizing open debates in which only Council members are entitled to speak will not be preserved. Once again, we acknowledge the valuable efforts to compile the positions of Member States in summaries. Nevertheless, the true nature of open debates is the ability of countries to actually deliver their statements, to be heard by Council members and to have their views formally on record.

In any circumstance, even during exceptional times, we must make every effort to ensure that due publicity is given to the Council's activities and deliberations. Webcasting is a key element of communication with the wider membership, which in turn implies that public meetings should be the preferred option whenever possible. And, of course, all attention must be given to ensure that concerned non-Council members have the right to participate in Council discussions when their interests are especially affected.

In considering the Security Council's working methods, our main reference must always be the letter and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. In this regard, there is no antagonism between transparency and effectiveness. Since the Council acts on behalf of the entire membership, transparency and accountability are inextricable elements of its responsibility. Together, they can lead the Council to be more effective and legitimate, since they are the best way to guarantee that its decisions will be better understood and implemented by all Member States.

The Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions has proved itself an important forum for reflecting on ways to enhance the working methods of the Security Council. We highlight in particular the valuable and skilful work done by its Chair, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, following up on the efforts made by its predecessors. We support in particular all efforts to translate the deliberations of the Informal Working Group into presidential notes so that the commitments adopted therein are formal and public.

As a newly elected member, we have special interest in the full implementation of note 507 (S/2017/507), including on the items pertaining to the selection of the Chairs of subsidiary bodies. This selection must be open, transparent, and based on ample consultations among all interested Member States. Adequate burden-sharing and distribution of responsibilities is one of the best ways to enhance the decision-making process in the Council. A fair and adequate distribution of penholderships and co-penholderships will help to foster greater levels of transparency and accountability. Chairpersonships and penholderships should be seen from a more integrated perspective, and for this reason, Chairs of the subsidiary bodies could be invited to be co-penholders on issues related to their activities. The main issue is to ensure not only that elected members take part in negotiations from the early stages of the process but also that they will have greater drafting responsibilities in the Council.

There is room for improvement in many other areas of the working methods. First, the Council should prioritize, whenever appropriate, the holding of public meetings, especially in exceptional circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Private meetings and informal consultations should be seen as exceptions, not the rule.

Second, the Security Council should prioritize better coordination, cooperation and interaction with the principal organs of the United Nations, paying special attention to the need to avoid encroaching on the mandate of the General Assembly. We continue to believe that substantive consultations could avoid the duplication of work and the erosion of the Assembly's mandate. We also agree that the Security Council's annual report should be more analytical and forward-looking.

Third, the Council should rely more often on the valuable advice that the Peacebuilding Commission can provide, including on preventive diplomacy and cooperation with local actors, such as regional and sub-regional organizations. The Commission is uniquely placed to enrich the discussion of mandates and to provide cross-cutting perspectives on different topics. Its Chairs should therefore be invited by the Council, whenever possible, to discuss issues of common interest.

Fourth, it is essential that measures be taken to promote better access of the wider membership to subsidiary bodies, per article 31 of the Charter of the United Nations, which states that “any Member of the United Nations which is not a member of the Security Council may participate, without vote, in the discussion of any question brought before the Security Council whenever the latter considers that the interests of that Member are specially affected”. There is no reason for not applying this provision to the subsidiary bodies.

Lastly, consultations with troop- and police-contributing countries should be timely and substantive, not merely a formal process with no bearing on the Council’s mandates.

Seventy-five years after its creation, only a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, with the expansion of both categories of membership, will make this body more representative of the current geopolitical realities. Improvements in the working methods are part of this process but should not be seen as a replacement for the urgent need for structural changes in the Council. We therefore renew our call for all Member States to redouble their efforts to update the Security Council, bringing it into line with our contemporary reality and thereby fostering its transparency, accountability and effectiveness.

Annex V

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations

[Original: Spanish]

We welcome today's debate on working methods, that, a little over a year after the previous debate, gives us an opportunity to discuss and analyze various viewpoints after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of the Security Council and how those impacts are an important source of knowledge on the evolution and adaptation of the work of this body.

We would thus like to raise four points:

- Chile, as a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, will continue to support the promotion of transparency in decision-making at the Security Council, as well as accountability for those decisions. We believe that the achievements and advances in the reform of the Council now more than ever must be reflected in the use of new technologies to facilitate decision-making, especially during crises or global pandemics, which impede the holding of in-person meetings and alter conventional working methods.
- With regard to open debates, we recognize as a good step forward the sending of statements by Member States to the Office of the President for circulation as a Security Council document, but we also believe that it has already been demonstrated that we are technologically capable of hearing the delegations involved directly, and we encourage the members of the Security Council to continue exploring the option of a hybrid format for open debates, thus setting a precedent for the future that may be used when presence in the Security Council Chamber is limited for health reasons.
- We note that, during the Presidency of the Dominican Republic in April 2020, the open debate on youth, peace and security included representatives of civil society during the pandemic to inform the Security Council about their experiences, and likewise, during May 2021, the inclusion of civil society was a matter of priority to the Presidency of China. We hope that this will become a precedent for future open debates and thematic briefings; we have recently discovered that technology allows the holding of hybrid meetings, facilitating the process of learning about experiences from the field without having to travel long distances, providing key background for later deliberations by the Council.
- We also note the relevance of the use of new technologies and media platforms in line with the commitment made at the United Nations level to combat the dissemination of false information. The Security Council and the United Nations bodies working in the area of international peace and security have a key role to play in that area, because accurate and timely information (from and to the field) has an underlying impact on greater security for civilian and uniformed personnel during the implementation of mandates and is a primary factor in flexible decision-making in this body.

For Chile, protecting and strengthening multilateralism will continue to be a priority in which the reform of the Security Council is essential in order to legitimize not only decisions on international peace and security but also the ability of the United Nations to reach the field in time and fulfil its principal duty: the effective protection of civilians and those who are disproportionately impacted by new threats and conflicts.

Annex VI

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations, Guillermo Fernandez Soto

[Original: Spanish]

Colombia wishes to thank Estonia for convening this annual debate on the working methods of the Security Council.

My delegation associates itself with the statement by New Zealand on behalf of the countries which have served as elected members of the Security Council in recent years.

We believe that the provisions of note [S/2017/507](#) should remain in force, insofar as they establish the areas of work which form the agenda of the Council, through which its mandate is fulfilled.

During the current pandemic, the world has experienced the exacerbation of social and economic problems, making the guarantee of international peace and security more complex.

Those problems represent an additional challenge to its work and its responsibility to respond to a world that is increasingly fragmented and fragile.

Therefore, we need a revitalized Security Council in order to confront the new realities.

As stated on various occasions during intergovernmental negotiations in the General Assembly, our objective, together with the Uniting for Consensus Group, is to reinforce the Council's legitimacy in the eyes of the membership in general and international public opinion.

This will improve both its authority and its effectiveness.

Basically, it implies a revitalization of the multilateral system as a whole.

Colombia supports the efforts aimed at increasing transparency and building a new culture of accountability.

Transparency is reinforced by means of periodic reporting, which provides to the membership as a whole the most relevant tools and platforms regarding the activities of the Council.

Open debates on specific current topics have been very positive, particularly under the present circumstances. They should continue, including in virtual format, with the participation of civil society representatives and from a gender perspective.

A more analytical, integrated and contextualized annual report to be submitted to the General Assembly is an essential tool. It must go beyond by incorporating the main challenges to international peace and security, as well as contributions to address them.

Having more rigorous working methods ensures better interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly, a principle that has received broad support.

These good practices should be preserved, ensuring that all can be heard.

We must continue thinking of innovative ways and new spaces – formal and informal – that will lead to stronger ties among the membership as a whole.

Colombia believes that the veto power should be limited, as well as its application.

The expansion of this prerogative does not help to increase transparency, nor does it guarantee the principle of sovereign equality among States.

A process of regular elections and balanced regional distribution is the best path.

Guaranteeing those conditions will result in greater efficiency and effectiveness of this body, making it more democratic and representative.

Colombia last served as an elected member of the Security Council during the period 2011–2012.

During that mandate, we noted the potential and major contributions of the elected members to the activities of the Security Council and the fulfillment of its responsibilities.

Our task is aimed at improving working methods and procedures in order to guarantee transparency and inclusion for all member States.

Devising actions to address such problems as climate change, progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, peacebuilding and protection of women and children in conflict situations has provided an impetus to the elected members for the evolution of the Security Council mandate.

Its cooperation with regional and subregional organizations must be revitalized.

Its interaction with other United Nations bodies must also be promoted, given that a large part of its working agenda has to do with the conduct, monitoring and verification of the mandates of peacekeeping missions and special political missions.

A good example is the constructive cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission, which was a priority during our chairmanship in 2019–2020.

To conclude, I would like to highlight my country's unshakeable commitment to multilateralism and respect for international law, together with building an Organization that can meet the challenges of the twenty-first century fully and in a timely manner.

Improvements and new tools for the Security Council are essential in order to meet this goal, with a view to executing its universal mandate for the preservation of peace and security.

I am certain that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has opened new horizons for us to consider and redefine the working methods of the Organization. The pandemic has allowed us to break the patterns of the past, innovate in the virtual realm and direct us toward new paradigms.

Annex VII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, Pedro Luis Pedroso Cuesta

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has put to the test the ability of the United Nations to maintain its vitality, lend continuity to its work and make decisions.

In this context, we recognize the efforts made to try to ensure the work of the Security Council and the participation of Member States through temporary and unusual working methods. At the same time, such methods are not sufficient, as they limit, inter alia, the participation of a non-member State of the Council in closed consultations when an issue involving that State in particular is being discussed, as laid down in article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council. Nor has the full participation of Member States in the open debates through videoconferences been possible.

We emphasize, therefore, the transitory nature of these working methods, which in no way constitute a precedent for the future work of the Council. They only respond to the exceptional circumstances imposed by the current health situation.

We reiterate our support for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, including its working methods, to make it a transparent, democratic and representative body, in conformity with the current membership of the United Nations.

Effective procedures are required to eliminate discriminatory practices and ensure genuine participation and democratization in the Council's work and decision-making processes, including the removal of the veto power. As long as the latter is not removed, the new seats to be created in the category of permanent members should have the same prerogatives and rights as the current members, including the veto power.

Greater transparency in the work of the body becomes indispensable for the effective exercise of its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security and acting on behalf of all Member States, pursuant to article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations.

In all circumstances, it must be allowed and ensured that a State directly involved or particularly affected participates in the discussions and decision-making process on matters by which it is directly affected, as set out in article 31 of the Charter.

We call for informal negotiations to be transparent and for the minutes of the organ's informal consultations to be issued.

While we recognize the increase in the number of public meetings in recent years, we are concerned about the continuing trend for the Security Council to work primarily in closed formats, especially on issues of huge international significance that concern all Member States, to adopt decisions without paying heed to the concerns of the organ's non-member States and to force decision-making on draft resolutions when there are still significant differences of opinion as to their content and scope.

We re-emphasize the need for the Council to adopt a definitive text to regulate its work and put an end to the "provisional" status that its rules of procedure have enjoyed for more than 70 years. This is essential for transparency and the necessary accountability.

We also regret that the Security Council submits annual reports to the General Assembly that are merely a descriptive summary of the meetings, activities and decisions of the organ instead of reflecting an explanatory, thorough and analytical content of its work, which would allow for the assessment of the causes and implications of its decisions.

In the performance of its functions, the Security Council must conform to the mandate that it exercises under the Charter of the United Nations and stop interfering in affairs that fall within the jurisdiction of other organs, particularly those that relate to the mandate of the General Assembly.

We also reject the selective manipulation of the Council's methods and practices in accordance with political and domination agendas.

We reaffirm the need for a reformed, democratic, transparent and efficient Security Council that represents the interests of all Member States and contributes effectively to the preservation of the multilateralism, credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations.

Annex VIII

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations

Cyprus thanks the Estonian presidency for sustaining the momentum of the debate on the working methods of the Security Council and wishes to offer the following remarks under the designated remit of today's debate.

The Council must always be functional and cannot, under any circumstances, fail to be in a position to fulfil its mandate. We consider that, with the Covid crisis still ongoing, the time is now opportune for the Council to codify its default reaction to similar future crises, so as to have a ready set of working methods to fall back on if unable to carry out its work through the physical presence of its members.

In codifying its functioning under such extraordinary circumstances, the Council must ensure that (a) it can adopt the necessary products without delay, (b) its work is as transparent as possible vis-à-vis non-members of the Council, and (c) it can relate effectively to those Member States that are directly affected by its work.

While some innovations in the work of the Council during the time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic could be retained for use when the Council returns fully to its regular functioning, we believe that such adaptations should be considered only to the extent that they contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council and serve the fulfilment of its mandate. One example would be the debriefing of the Council through videoconference, on an exceptional basis and with the ad hoc agreement of the Council, by experts from the field who could not travel to New York, if their contribution is unique.

Maintaining a balance between open and private meetings is, in our view, an artificial dilemma. The sole criterion that should guide this decision is necessity, in the sense that all meetings of the Council that have no reason to be closed should be open.

Turning specifically to how the Council relates to Member States directly affected by items on its agenda, an effort should be made in this direction in future crisis modes. Access to the Council for such Member States is difficult under normal circumstances and was made more so by the fully virtual functioning of the Council.

We propose that an informal channel be established between the Council, perhaps through its President, and directly affected Member States in such settings, and we reiterate our proposal for the Council to invite a conflict State to offer its perspective in closed consultations before it deliberates on a situation, in both virtual and physical settings.

In the same vein, we propose that all Member States hosting United Nations peacekeeping operations should, again in both virtual and physical settings, (a) have a chance to offer their perspective before the Council when it discusses mandate renewal and (b) be included in troop-contributing country meetings.

Annex IX**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations, Cristian Espinosa**

[Original: Spanish]

We welcome the presentation by the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, and we also commend her leadership on the question. We also commend the briefings by the Executive Director of the Security Council Report, Karin Lundgren, and the co-author of “The Procedure of the UN Security Council, 4th edition”, Lorraine Sievers.

Ecuador associates itself with the statement of Switzerland on behalf of the countries of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group.

In our national capacity, we would like to note the efforts of the members of the Security Council to ensure the continuity of its work under extreme circumstances, as was the case of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which we are coming out of.

While welcoming the opportunity to submit this written intervention, we would like to stress, as did my delegation in May of last year, that ideally, the interested representatives should be able to participate directly in the debates of the Council, in accordance with article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.

The Arria-Formula meetings organized by Estonia in 2020 and 2021 to mark the 75th anniversary since the end of the Second World War in Europe, on cybersecurity, and more recently in relation to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on violations against children in situations of armed conflict, are an example of existing technological solutions.

Indeed, we recognize that the system for submitting these written contributions has somewhat improved by allowing their submission in advance. However, in order to enable these written interventions to have some bearing on the briefings by speakers, the latter should also be requested and distributed in advance.

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed both the strengths and the weaknesses in the working methods of all the bodies in the system, including the Security Council. This experience requires us to revitalize our working methods in order to make the work of the Council more resilient and above all to ensure its continuity in all circumstances, including the most difficult.

The subject of this debate probably encompasses one of the most crucial issues in the Organization. Having effective working methods promotes both the revitalization of the Security Council and of the United Nations as a whole. Therefore, in the calculations for the modernization of working methods, not just the flow of internal procedures and communications among members of the Council and the Council and its subsidiary bodies should be considered, but also among the Council and the rest of the bodies in the System, and of its permanent members and non-permanent members with the rest of the States Members of the Organization.

Ecuador supports the implementation of note [S/2017/507](#) and all the existing provisions on the issue. We believe that there is sufficient room to expand transparency regarding the process of drafting and discussion of resolutions. Greater flexibility in drafting a text is also required, in such a way that the views of the 15 members of the Council, and ideally the membership as a whole, are included.

Debates and meetings should be able to rely on an existing solid base of information that includes real statistics, projections and proposed solutions; not just the general information in concept notes that is certainly highly useful, but also wide-ranging information that enables operational results and avoids being limited to theoretical discussions.

While acknowledging that certain sensitive elements of some issues can require a certain amount of discretion and prudence, that cannot be a pretext for institutionalizing secret diplomacy. Every decision should have its respective explanatory record that in addition will grant maximum legitimacy to the decisions taken.

The Security Council acts on behalf of the Member States of the United Nations, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, but the other side of that representation is the obligation to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, and this responsibility contained in that same article must be carried out without exception.

In conclusion, Ecuador recognizes the work of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Mexico, which now holds a seat on the Council, in coordination with the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) both at the ambassadorial level and as coordinators and experts.

Annex X**Statement of the Arab Republic of Egypt**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, it is my pleasure to express our appreciation to the Estonian presidency of the Security Council in June 2021 for its willingness to address this important subject and receive contributions from the general membership with a view to hearing the views and suggestions of all countries. This in itself represents a practical way of improving the working methods of the Security Council. Furthermore, I cannot fail to thank the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for her leadership of the Informal Working Group and to welcome the valuable briefings of Karin Landgren and Loraine Sievers.

My country's delegation supports the statement submitted by New Zealand on behalf of a group of Member States who recently served as non-permanent members of the Security Council. On behalf of my country, I should like to add the following points:

- The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has imposed a strange new reality on the Security Council and international action as a whole, the impact of which needs to be evaluated not only from the procedural aspect but also in terms of the extent to which the Council's handling of the crisis, which has swept across the world, has been effective. Holding virtual meetings and adopting resolutions on time should not, despite its importance, be the only yardstick of success. From our perspective, the most important thing is to determine the extent to which the Council has carried out its responsibility to address the crisis and coordinate international efforts to overcome it.
- As such, Egypt is keen to submit this statement in the belief that the debate on Security Council working methods will become increasingly important in the aftermath of the pandemic, given the logistical challenges imposed and the difficulties of monitoring the course of events in the Council, which have only added to the existing deficit of transparency in Council business and, consequently, in the interaction between Council and general membership when it comes to coordinating international action to overcome the threat we all face.
- We maintain that the best way to manage Council business is to keep to the specifics of note [S/2017/507](#). In this context, we believe it is essential for the Security Council to return to normal operation, given the improvement in the health situation and the relative easing of precautionary measures at United Nations headquarters.
- The general membership should receive regular briefings and their views on the formulation of the Council's action programme should be heard. They must also be informed of important meetings, activities and visits undertaken by the Security Council, and the chairs of Council subsidiary bodies and subcommittees should give regular briefings to the general membership.
- It is important to increase the frequency of all types of open meetings of the Security Council, its subsidiary bodies and sanctions committees. It must be remembered that the Security Council represents the general membership and acts on its behalf. As such, Council meetings and business should not, as a general rule, be concealed from the general membership, with the exception of meetings concerning the national security of States and at the request of those States.

- To ensure genuine engagement and interaction between the Security Council and general membership vis-à-vis Council initiatives, the general membership should be provided with the draft resolutions and statements put before the Security Council and kept informed of the course of consultations. As far as possible, the general membership should have the opportunity to make its views and suggestions known to the Member States of the Security Council.
- We underline the importance of consultations between the Security Council and regional and sub-regional States and organizations (particularly the African Union and League of Arab States) on conflicts addressed by the Security Council.
- Furthermore, it is essential to continue to improve Security Council consultation with States contributing troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations, as stated in paragraph 91 of note [S/2017/507](#).
- The subsidiary bodies of the Security Council, particularly sanctions committees and expert committees, should consult with the relevant States when drafting reports that concern these States.
- The relevant States should be invited to participate in meetings of subsidiary bodies and committees if the topic of the meeting concerns them. This is one of the matters referred to, inter alia, in paragraphs 101–110 of note [S/2017/507](#).

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that numerous proposals have been made on how to develop the working methods of the Security Council, its subsidiary bodies and sanctions committees. However, the crucial factor is the political will needed to put them into practice and the conviction that developing these methods will increase the added value of the Council, its subsidiary bodies and subcommittees and enhance its credibility before of the general membership and, of course, vice versa.

Annex XI

Statement by the Permanent Mission of El Salvador to the United Nations

[Original: Spanish]

El Salvador thanks the Estonian Presidency for including this open debate in the programme of work, and the delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for its work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We commend these efforts aimed at greater transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in Security Council processes as well as the promotion of more interaction among all United Nations bodies.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic largely redefined the agenda for the work of the entire Organization. Its impacts have exacerbated existing challenges and have revealed our weaknesses even more. On the other hand, it revealed the need to address global threats through revitalized multilateralism, on the basis of solidarity and international cooperation. El Salvador firmly believes that multilateralism is not an option, but a necessity in our task of building back better for a more equal, resilient and sustainable world.

Concerning the Security Council, this creates a space for reflection on how to ensure the strict fulfilment of Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular, how to ensure prompt and effective action on the collective responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

It has once again become imperative to consider the current status of the working methods of the Security Council from a constructive viewpoint, with the goal of creating greater effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness in its activities.

El Salvador believes that throughout the history of the Organization, it has been demonstrated that strengthening the working methods of the Security Council is important not only to ensure that this body can fulfil its responsibilities, but also to guarantee that the United Nations is up to the current challenges and meets the aspirations of the peoples it serves.

Therefore, El Salvador sees it as highly important that efforts should continue to improve the functioning of the Security Council by promoting its democratization and accountability. The implementation of such measures will help to strengthen its efficiency and transparency, as well as the necessary interaction and dialogue with non-member States.

Along those lines, El Salvador recognizes the major progress achieved by the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which has contributed, among other things, to the adoption of the Notes by the President of the Security Council that clarified, consolidated and strengthened those working methods.

Likewise, it attaches great importance to the discussions being held as part of the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of representation on the Security Council and an increase in its membership and related issues, which have demonstrated that a significant number of States want to contribute to the improvement of its working methods.

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 posed major challenges to the functioning of the United Nations. El Salvador recognizes that the Security Council, like the rest of its bodies, adapted to unprecedented circumstances arising from the pandemic. The adoption of innovative and flexible methods for decision-making through silence procedures and holding virtual meetings or with a hybrid format in specific

circumstances allowed the work of monitoring and ensuring the renewal of the mandate of residual mechanisms and various peacekeeping operations and special political missions to continue, as well as advancing the various thematic issues on its agenda.

In the future, El Salvador considers it important for the members of the Security Council to continue to discuss those practices with the objective of achieving consensus with respect to their use and future implementation, with a view to adopting the lessons learned and good practices arising from a crisis such as the one created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

El Salvador believes that flexibility in the working methods of the Security Council has not resulted in a weakening of that body; on the contrary, it has enabled it to fulfil the objectives and mandates conferred by the Charter of the United Nations, at the same time increasing its legitimacy.

Taking into account that the improvement in the working methods of the Security Council is not an end in itself, but a continuous process that should change over time, El Salvador believes the Council should modernize its working methods through measures that allow it to fulfil its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

On the question of peacekeeping, El Salvador believes that it would also facilitate the ability of Council members to place special focus on the formulation of solid and effective mandates that would have the greatest possible political support, thus guaranteeing their funding. Along those lines, the members of the Security Council would identify additional practical proposals by including the views of each of the parties involved. Furthermore, special attention must be paid to the formulation of a political strategy as a central element in the establishment and modification of the mandates of peacekeeping operations, a process that could benefit from the views and recommendations of all the parties as well as troop- and police-contributing members of the General Assembly, and in particular, the views of the receiving country.

Furthermore, we believe that to meet that aspiration, once conditions improve, in-person participation should resume for the 178 remaining delegations to the General Assembly, who have found it impossible to participate in the various consultations, to intervene in the open debates and to be part of the deliberations on the various substantive items and other questions addressed within the Security Council.

El Salvador recognizes the progress made by the Security Council in the elaboration and subsequent submission to the General Assembly of its report on its work for 2020 and we maintain our call to continue this good practice and to spare no effort to meet the timelines established in [S/2017/507](#) of 30 August 2017. We encourage the members of the Security Council to submit future reports to the General Assembly that contain a full, substantive and analytical report on its work; we also encourage holding open consultations before and during its drafting, an effort that will lead to a democratic process in the Security Council and at the same time represent an interest in taking into consideration the concerns and views of the membership as a whole.

The report should include an analysis of the decision-making process within the Council, as well as elements that further clarify the motivations lead its permanent members to make use of the veto.

We call for the continued timely publication of the reports on the activities of each of the monthly presidencies, and above all, that in addition to a listing of documents, they contain an analysis of situations, including threats that could pose a

risk to international peace and security. In the same way, we request that the reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council be issued in the six official languages, so that there is sufficient time to consult them before the debates and meetings on the various peacekeeping operations, special political missions and open debates, as they represent a very important input that allows active and constructive participation by the members of the General Assembly.

Concerning official outcomes and agreements, El Salvador calls attention in particular to the decline in the number of official documents adopted in the Security Council from year to year, which could be attributed to its difficulty in building consensus. Resolutions, presidential statements and press statements are important mechanisms for carrying out its principal responsibility to maintain international peace and security as conferred by the Charter of the United Nations.

El Salvador calls on the members to let a constructive spirit prevail and above all to put the will to fulfil the mandate to provide timely responses to imminent and emerging threats to international peace and security before individual interests. The time has come to strengthen the political will of each of the actors for the adoption of effective measures in order to confront traditional threats as well as the new threats to international peace and security.

We would like to draw the attention of the members of this body to the importance of holding consultations before and during the negotiation of Security Council resolutions with the rest of the members of the General Assembly whenever possible, especially those resolutions that will subsequently be opened up to the sponsorship of all the members of the Organization. That would make clear the implications of those texts and, given that they are binding, the commitment that we are making. Providing opportunities to sponsor unfamiliar texts with less than 24 hours to consult with capitals and reply to the proposing country is a practice that the Council should improve in the future.

Regarding transparency, El Salvador highlights the efforts of the monthly presidencies of the Security Council to strengthen inclusion, participation and accountability to the States that are not members of that body through the presentation of their programmes of work for each month as well as the monthly meetings summarizing activities. We encourage future presidencies to continue that practice.

We appreciate that the members of the Security Council, in coordination with the monthly Presidents, hold Arria-Formula meetings, as they provide a platform for dialogue and interaction with actors directly involved in situations that put international peace, security and stability at risk. However, such meetings should not replace official meetings of the Council, as we have seen in recent months. Nor should that meeting format be a tool for political promotion, nullifying its consultative character, which in the past has led to significant progress on various items on the agenda of the Security Council.

El Salvador encourages the members of the Security Council and of the United Nations in general to continue to abide by the principle of international cooperation and solidarity. The pandemic is not an excuse for going backwards; on the contrary, it has opened a space for reflection on a new era for the Organization, with a preference for focusing on strengthening multilateralism, transparency and inclusiveness.

El Salvador also recalls the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations, in which all Member States of the Organization made a commitment to modernize the United Nations, considering that the world of today is very different than it was 75 years ago, when the Organization was created.

The ability and will to act to promote international peace and security should align itself with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations; no one should forget that a failure of this type not only weakens the credibility of the Organization and the multilateral system, but also puts the lives of millions of people around the world at risk.

Annex XII

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations

Guatemala would like to express its gratitude to the Estonian presidency of the Security Council for convening this open videoconference on the theme “Agility and innovation: lessons learned from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic” with regard to efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Council. We are confident that our deliberations will not only renew the commitment to continue advancing in the improvement of the efficiency and transparency of the Council but also serve as a solid basis for the effective implementation of the presidential note 507 (S/2017/507), to which our delegation attributes great relevance. Guatemala also wishes to express its thanks the delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

As we have indicated in the past, Guatemala recognizes the progress on some practices and the reinforcement of other measures included in note 507, thanks to the commendable work by the Informal Working Group, skilfully chaired by previous delegations. During the time of the pandemic, the work of the Security Council has been extremely relevant to the international community, considering that this pandemic has severely affected our populations and thus international peace and security. However, the codification of best practices is an unfinished task and continues to be an extremely useful exercise for the work of this body. Also taking into account our own experience as a non-permanent member of the Security Council during the period 2012–2013, we consider that there is always room for improvement, and in this regard, we would highlight three issues of current relevance to the working methods of the Security Council.

First, the search for information and understanding regarding the Council’s activities remains a fundamental and legitimate request. Although there has been an increase in the Council’s public sessions, the continuation of the practice of open debates, adapted to the format of open virtual debates during this pandemic, has promoted the wider participation of those who are not members of the Council. In recent years, the holding of numerous meetings in accordance with the Arria formula has enabled the Council to obtain truthful information in order to be more effective in its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. We believe holding wrap-up sessions is important, as is further interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission – an advisory body to the Council that plays an important role in preventing the recurrence of conflict – and with the presidents of the configurations of the Commission in charge of specific countries, as well as with other United Nations bodies. We appreciate that the provisions of note 507 continue to be implemented regarding the importance of maintaining communication with the Commission, as an intergovernmental advisory body, as well as its configurations. Obviously, this would allow the obtaining of reliable and first-hand information as well as of precise advice on the country configurations of the Commission. In addition, it also would allow the generation of efficiencies in terms of the conflict prevention approach, maintaining a correct orientation regarding the implementation of the concept of sustaining peace.

Second, the Council has, in the past, taken very relevant decisions on the appointment of Chairs of the different subsidiary bodies in a balanced, transparent and inclusive way. The aforementioned practice allowed a change, since there is the impression that consultations are taking place around the process, especially among the newly elected members of the Council. My delegation hopes that this practice and

trend will be reinforced in the future. It is also necessary to ensure that the selection and appointment processes of the different expert groups are more transparent and balanced so that there is the widest possible geographical and gender representation, bearing in mind the guidelines in paragraph 111 of note [S/2017/507](#), which indicate that the appointment of the presidencies of the subsidiary bodies must be agreed by no later than 1 October of each year. In this context, we consider that the timely appointment of the presidencies will help to strengthen the decisions related to the sanctions committees and their effective implementation.

Third, as a troop-contributing country in United Nations peacekeeping operations, we attach high value to what is indicated in section VIII of note 507, since the importance of holding consultations between the Security Council, the Secretariat and the countries that contribute troops and police forces is paramount for the implementation of the mandates decided by the Council. Certainly, the interactions with the troop-contributing countries increase the capacity of the Council in making appropriate, effective and timely decisions in the fulfilment of its responsibilities. This coordination is also vital during the difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to the security of our troops deployed in the field. It is important to keep troop-contributing countries aware of any transitions from peacekeeping operations to special political missions, as well as any changes in the mandates.

In conclusion, our delegation appreciates the updated work that has, in past years, been firmly based on the working methods of the Security Council. We very much welcome the progress made in the last three years, and in particular during the time that this pandemic has affected the ordinary functioning of the United Nations. The practice reminds us that elected members, who are accountable to regional groups and to all Member States of the United Nations, are most likely to improve their working methods. The best way to highlight the representative and democratic character of the Council is to strengthen the standards of accountability and transparency. Improved cooperation with the permanent members would lead to greater effectiveness in the Council around the common objective of improving its working methods, since its decisions have an impact on the membership of the United Nations.

In this context, Guatemala also hopes that a relevant document of the Security Council could be agreed in the context of the unprecedented times we are living through because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Annex XIII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations

The existence of a combination of old and still unsettled conflicts, as well as a rapidly growing number of threats to international peace and security, underscores the importance of the Council's "agility" and readiness to respond, in particular to extraordinary circumstances. It is one of the critical elements for the Council's prompt, effective and continuous functioning, as required in articles 24(1) and 28(1) of the Charter of the United Nations.

At the same time, improving the Council's efficiency and effectiveness must always be considered a work in progress, given the evolving nature and scope of threats to international peace and security.

The most effective way to ensure the Council's transparency, efficiency and effectiveness is indeed to reform and evolve it into a truly transparent, rule-based and, above all, accountable organ. That is why the Council's "working methods" are among the five core issues in the ongoing debates on the reform of the Security Council.

While, in the past few decades, certain aspects of the Council's working methods have been relatively improved, they have not met the expectations of the entire membership, as improvements have been very few and slow.

Accordingly, in parallel with debates on the subject within the "intergovernmental negotiations", efforts to achieve progress in this regard must be redoubled, in particular within the Council itself.

The innovative approach taken by the Council during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic enabled it to adapt to a new and unprecedented situation and ensured its continued functioning. This highlights that the Council's agility must be continually improved and strengthened, including by adopting innovative methods and the proper use of advanced technologies.

Yet, although important, the Council's agility alone can neither ensure its effectiveness nor replace the genuine political will and spirit of responsibility of its Member States needed to deal with different challenges facing the Council.

During the Israeli regime's recent 11-day assault on Gaza, in which more than 250 civilians were killed, nearly 2,000 others injured and countless homes, hospitals, schools and mosques destroyed, we witnessed how irresponsibly and brazenly a permanent member of the Council prevented the issuance of even a simple Council's press statement calling for a ceasefire.

This, and of course the historical inaction of the Security Council in ending the occupation of Palestine, clearly attest to the fact that, in parallel with enhancing the Council's agility and transparency, there must be serious efforts to promote the accountability of this body and its Member States and to ensure that the Council acts in full accordance with international law and the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

According to article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, in fulfilling its tasks, the Security Council has a legal, political and moral responsibility to act promptly, effectively, properly and responsibly.

This means that the Council must avoid inaction, omission, or ultra vires decisions or considerations of situations that do not constitute a threat to international peace and security or issues that are related to the internal matters of States.

Likewise, its members shall decide on the basis not of their own national interests or of the geopolitical or geographical groups to which they belong but of the common interests of the entire membership of the United Nations.

The Council is responsible to the Member States, on behalf of which it acts and to which it must therefore remain accountable. This indeed is the *raison d'être* of article 24(3) of the Charter of the United Nations, pursuant to which the Council is obliged to submit annual and special reports to the General Assembly, where all Member States are represented.

Full compliance with the Charter is critical in preventing the Council from increasing, excessive and expeditious resort to its functions under chapter VII thereof, especially given the fact that it has imposed sanctions in situations where no action was even necessary, and as a result, the sovereign rights of States as well as the human rights of their citizens have been seriously violated.

This can also prevent the further deepening of the trust and confidence deficit and the credibility and legitimacy crisis that the Council already faces.

The continued improvement of the Council's working methods must be considered a common responsibility of Council members and of the entire United Nations membership in general, and Iran stands ready to contribute positively to such endeavours.

Annex XIV

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations

Today's open debate offers us an opportunity to elaborate on how the Council could enhance its working methods to better adapt them to ever-evolving circumstances.

It also grants us a chance to commend Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We trust that, under the leadership of Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, we will be able to introduce new, positive practices and further enhance the cooperation between the monthly presidencies and the Informal Working Group.

Italy was pleased to join the statement delivered today by New Zealand on behalf of a number of recently elected Council members from all regional groups and would like to make some additional remarks in its national capacity.

In line with the concept note for this meeting, we would like to emphasize that agility is an indispensable means by which the Security Council can perform, even in the direst of times.

It took an unforeseen, tragic crisis such as the pandemic to change our working methods. We are all familiar now with "smart-working" and "virtual meetings". We were able to introduce several positive innovations, as stated by New Zealand, to make the Council function. We should treasure them and be ready to do more, confident that the Security Council has shown itself able to seize new opportunities for its evolution.

Agility and innovation are indeed key to enhancing the Council's working methods. However, to really strengthen the Council's performance, we also need more transparency, more accountability and more efficiency.

More transparency can help to foster the trust of public opinion in this Organization and, ultimately, leads us closer to achieving the common goal of strengthening multilateralism. Aiming for that goal, we should schedule more open-format meetings and more informative briefings, we should invite more briefers from civil society, especially female briefers, and in particular, we should allow for better access to information.

More transparency would be essential for the elected ten that serve only two years. A thorough knowledge of the Council's procedures and practices can help them to "hit the ground running". We are convinced that better performance of the elected ten would translate into easier interactions with the Permanent Five and increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council as a whole. Better performance of the elected ten would be beneficial to the whole membership.

Italy would like to reaffirm today the need for the democratization of the Council. A first, important step in that direction would be for the 15 members to consistently act together on an equal footing. The elected ten should take on a more active role in the drafting and consultation process. To that end, we support fairer and more equal burden-sharing that should apply to the penholdership system and to the distribution of the chairpersonships of the subsidiary bodies.

Such fair and equal distribution of duties would be consistent with a more democratic, more transparent, more accountable, more efficient and more representative Security Council.

Our goal should be to improve the Security Council's working methods and to reform its structure and composition. At the unique juncture we are currently facing, we should not limit ourselves to merely adopting adaptive measures in order to return to "business as usual" but should rather look for new ways to work together better and make the Security Council more authoritative and efficient.

Annex XV**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, Ishikane Kimihiro**

I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Estonian presidency and to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, for organizing this open debate on improving the working methods of the Security Council, to which Japan has always been deeply committed. Japan also appreciates the tireless work of current and recent Council members on the development of the body's working methods.

Japan is pleased to see that the Council is beginning to normalize its activities as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) situation improves. Japan would like to reiterate its respect and gratitude to the successive presidencies of the Council since March 2020 for their efforts to continue the work of the Council under the unprecedented circumstances of the pandemic.

Necessity is the mother of invention. It is commendable that the Security Council has been able to carry out its work without interruption in this time of crisis, by making full use of digital technology with a challenging spirit. Innovative working methods have been developed, including videoconferences, voting procedures and the provisional programme of work, as well as arrangements for the compilation and circulation of statements submitted for open videoconference debates.

On the other hand, there is room for improvement. For example, requiring consensus to adopt agenda items for videoconferences hinders the Council's capacity to deal flexibly with impending issues, and we see no reason why different rules for agenda-setting should be applied to videoconferences. In addition, while the video format of the open debate has facilitated high-level participation by Council members, the situation whereby non-Council members are only allowed to submit written statements hampers the voices of non-Council members being heard in a timely manner.

The tools developed to cope with the various constraints imposed by the pandemic could serve to keep the Council operating under a similar situation in the future; for example, the shutdown of the United Nations premises due to heavy snowfall. Therefore, serious consideration should be given to the possibility of introducing new rules in the Council's working methods in order to be better prepared for any contingency.

Japan is of the view that, in pursuing reforms of the working methods, it is important to strike the right balance between the dual needs for transparency and efficiency. To strengthen the legitimacy of the decisions of the Council, the decision-making process should be as transparent as possible, allowing it to take into account different views from both inside and outside the Council.

On the other hand, we should be mindful of our prime objective, which is to enhance the Council's capacity to take the best action in the most efficient and timely manner in order to maintain and restore international peace and security. We believe that this applies not only to regular Council meetings but also to virtual meetings.

Japan is currently running for election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the 2023–2024 term and, if elected, will make further contributions to the improvement of the Council's working methods in cooperation with all Member States.

Annex XVI**Written statement of Ambassador Mansour Ayyad Alotaibi,
Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I should like to express my gratitude and appreciation to Estonia, president of the Security Council this month, and to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for holding this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council. I am delighted to see that the practice of holding an annual open debate on this important subject is continuing, pursuant to paragraph 100 of note [S/2017/507](#) of the President of the Security Council, despite the extraordinary circumstances we continue to face due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The State of Kuwait adds its voice in favour of the joint statement circulated by New Zealand on behalf of several former elected members of the Security Council.

This is the second open debate on Security Council working methods to be held against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we have seen, this unprecedented global health crisis has had an enormous impact on the work and performance of the United Nations, including the Security Council over the past year. We welcome the provisional measures adopted by the Council to adapt to the situation, while maintaining continuity of operations in line with article 28 of the Charter of the United Nations. I should like to commend the leadership of Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, for ensuring continuity of its meetings and business during this period.

In line with the goals and guidelines set out in the concept note circulated by the President of the Security Council, permit me to share with you the following proposals and:

1. In the light of the aforementioned provisional measures applied to Council working methods last year and as we work towards a return to normality, we believe that the Council could still retain some of the innovative practices developed during the pandemic to make its work more flexible and efficient, including continuing to allow some speakers to participate in meetings by video link, if unable to attend in person.
2. It is essential to continue to ensure full implementation of note 507, including the eight presidential notes agreed in December 2019, when Kuwait was chair of the Informal Working Group, which contain various suggestions on a number of issues and topics designed to improve the transparency and efficiency of the Council. These include, inter alia, increasing the transparency of the Council's informal sessions and activities and of the selection process for heads of subsidiary bodies and visiting missions, as well as several additional proposals designed to enhance the preparedness of incoming members of the Security Council.
3. We continue to stress the importance of the "penholder" issue and the need to develop a process of fair distribution of responsibilities among members of the Security Council: a large amount of work still needs to be done to ensure active and fair participation of all members in decision-making, noting that this issue has been debated intensively by the Informal Working Group in recent years, including during the time that Kuwait was its chair. I am pleased that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has continued the debate within the framework of the Group and we hope to see tangible outcomes in the near future.

4. Striking a balance between transparency and efficiency remains an important issue and one that needs further discussion, particularly in view of the increase in the Council's workload in recent years. As such, if informal consultations have been scheduled, members of the Council might be encouraged not to speak in public. If members are disposed to make public statements, they might be encouraged to be brief and to leave more substantive discussion for informal consultations. The President could consult with speakers before determining the format of a Council meeting. For example, if a speaker indicates that he has certain information which he would prefer to convey to members of the Council confidentially, the session could adopt the format of a private or informal consultation. In addition, the Secretariat, penholder or President could advise on the desirability of holding meetings on the basis of mandated reporting cycles and decide whether or not it is necessary to hold a Council meeting that particular month.

5. I am delighted to see the Council going to such lengths to ensure that its annual report to the General Assembly is submitted on time. However, we shall continue to encourage members to ensure that its substance is more analytical and detailed.

6. Another topic which we believe is important to consider is the issue of due process within the context of the Security Council's sanctions committees, including the role of the Ombudsman in this regard; this issue is of considerable importance to many Member States outside the Council.

7. If Council measures or press statements are embargoed by certain members and consensus cannot be reached, we should encourage select groups of Council members to make joint oral or written public statements, particularly when pressing issues are involved.

We are pleased to see the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole transitioning in orderly fashion from virtual meetings to in-person meetings as the restrictions imposed on New York City due to the COVID-19 pandemic are lifted. Following the outbreak of the virus and its impact on our working lives, the Council successfully adapted to the exceptional circumstances, showing considerable ingenuity and flexibility by developing new, temporary working methods. This is a positive example of what can be achieved when Council members come together and engage constructively to ensure the continued effectiveness of Council work.

As I have stated before and from my personal experience as a former chair of the Informal Working Group, I can testify with certainty that tangible and effective change in the working methods of the Council can only be achieved through cooperation and a genuine desire on the part of all members, as we have witnessed since the start of the pandemic. I hope that we shall continue to see such flexibility, creativity and willingness to pursue innovation and change after the pandemic has come to an end, thereby continuing to increase the Security Council's effectiveness, capability and transparency.

We urge all members of the Security Council to continue to adapt Council working methods to their needs, building upon current developments, while maintaining high standards of transparency and accountability. Furthermore, we reaffirm the support of the State of Kuwait for a more transparent, efficient and accountable Security Council through the efforts of its members, including the Informal Working Group, and our readiness to support these efforts in any way we can.

Annex XVII

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Latvia to the United Nations

Latvia's recent accession to the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group underlines the importance that Latvia attaches to transparency and accountability in the work of the Council. The Security Council remains the principal organ for maintaining international peace and security, and its actions have serious implications with respect to international law.

The past year has demonstrated that working methods have been the main guarantor of the continued functioning of the Security Council and multilateral system. We appreciate the Council's efforts at putting a particular focus on adjusting working methods in the light of the dynamics of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) restrictions in place in New York. The adaptation and adjustment of the working methods have been crucial for ensuring the business continuity of the Council. We particularly commend those States that have taken extra steps and innovative approaches to ensure the transparency of the Council during this challenging time. It has been of the utmost importance that the wider United Nations membership could follow Council's work online and partake in the open debates with their statements.

We should take note of the lessons learned from this time to further reinforce the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Security Council and maintain, whenever applicable, the virtual high-level participation of all United Nations members together with in-person meetings. Hybrid formats allow the contribution of more high-level participants and allow for more inclusive engagement by the Council with the wider United Nations membership. We strongly appreciate the participation and inclusion in virtual meetings of civil society briefers who, in some cases, might otherwise have been unable to participate in person. Furthermore, as part of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, we encourage the Council to continue the positive trend of institutionalizing monthly wrap-up sessions.

Latvia welcomes the adoption of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. The report provides a valuable overview of the work of the Security Council during 2020 and is a factual deposition of the Council's work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the pandemic has demonstrated the importance of transparent, agile and efficient working methods in the Council, especially in the light of the limitations related to the Council's engagement with the wider membership.

In order to ensure business continuity in the Council during unexpected crises, contingency planning has to be prioritized and include provisions for the Council and its subsidiary organs that allow it to carry out all aspects of its work uninterrupted, especially with regard to voting on both substantive and procedural matters. The potential provided by technology should be considered at the centre of this planning. Contingency planning considerations should be included in the Security Council's annual report. In addition, it should be an axiom that both the Security Council and the Secretariat share their responsibility in doing their utmost to improve and implement procedures.

Taking steps to create conditions for the Security Council to take decisive action and foster cooperation even under strained circumstances is critical for international peace and security and for multilateralism. Latvia stands ready to make its contribution in this area and calls for the Council to keep moving forward. Complacency is not an option.

Annex XVIII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the United Nations, Christian Wenaweser

Liechtenstein aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group.

Let me begin by honouring the memory of one of our former colleagues who made a big personal contribution to the working methods of the Security Council. Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, as the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, oversaw the adoption of the first note 507 in 2006. Liechtenstein sends its condolences and deep gratitude to his family and to all those who knew him.

Working methods have long been an area subject to ongoing discussions and slow and gradual improvements, even before the challenge to maintain business continuity created by the pandemic. The Council rose to the challenge in some areas; it found new ways to operate and made progress in harnessing technological innovations that might otherwise have taken far longer. The Council must now hold on to these improvements while ensuring that it does not roll back on pre-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) standards of working methods in areas where pandemic-induced progress has not been so forthcoming. Liechtenstein hopes that submissions to this debate will help to inform ongoing discussions in the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and can, in parallel, contribute a thorough lessons-learned process so that the Council can be better prepared for future crises.

We appreciate the progress that has been made on the holding of meetings via videoconference over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. While, before the pandemic, some briefers had been able to address the Council virtually, this practice has been further institutionalized in the Council's work. Briefers have had hitherto unforeseen opportunities to inform Council discussions, and record levels of high-level participation have been made possible, without the additional costs to our climate that related travel would otherwise entail. Videoconference participation should now be broadly accepted in Council meetings, with the aim of enhancing the inclusivity of the Council's discussions.

In coming back to the chamber, we must ensure that the Council has not lost any of its agility to address situations with the requisite urgency. One tool that the Council has unfortunately been unable to utilize while absent from the chamber is the ability to hold procedural votes. While the frequent use of the procedural vote would be a signal of a dysfunctional Council, it can be an important way to address divisions, thus ensuring that the Council is fit for purpose.

Liechtenstein notes that the use of Arria-formula meetings by members of the Council has increased significantly, and sometimes in a manner that is clearly not in keeping with its original purpose. In many cases, Arria-formula meetings lend important value to the Council's work on topics for which a formal meeting is not possible, as well as enhancing the Council's inclusivity and relevance. We are increasingly aware of the use of Arria-formula meetings to bring negative atmospherics to the Council's work or to provide a forum to promote narrow political interests and narratives by a small group of States.

Liechtenstein congratulates Estonia for being able to bring the Council back to the chamber for the vast majority of meetings, following the trend set by the Chinese presidency toward the end of May. In this respect, the natural next step for the Council is to make open debates truly open to the membership by ensuring that the in-person format, including verbal statements, applies to all participants. The added value of

open debates lies in their inclusivity and transparency, whereby United Nations Member and observer States are given the opportunity to contribute to the discussion on equal terms with Council members. In its current guise, the Council risks creating a “two-tier” system for participation in open debates, which defeats the very purpose of the format. We therefore encourage Council members to explore safe modalities for in-person participation in open debates, for example including timed arrivals of non-Council members and the use of the antechamber to ensure an uninterrupted flow in the speakers list.

Annex XIX

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations

Malta thanks the Estonian presidency of the Security Council for organizing today's open debate on working methods, the second during its term on the Council. We consider this to be an important meeting and we greatly appreciate the opportunity to share our views on this matter. We also thank today's briefers: Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, whom we also thank for her work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, Ms. Sievers and Ms. Landgren, for sharing their insights and valuable contributions.

Malta underscores the need to continue to build on what has already been achieved over the years in order to have a more effective and transparent Council; a Council that embodies the values of dialogue and multilateralism. We are convinced that efforts towards this goal will also contribute to having a Council that continues to enjoy the trust and respect of our citizens. In this context, we also stress the importance that we attach to having briefers from non-governmental organizations and civil society, as they are uniquely placed to provide us with a clear, accurate and factual picture of the actual situation on the ground.

This year's open debate coincides with a time when we are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. While the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has seriously affected the way in which we all work, the Council was remarkably swift to embrace technology and digital solutions and move to online meetings when the pandemic struck last year. We thank members of the Council, successive presidencies and all those involved for making this possible.

We also take this opportunity to reiterate our gratitude to France and Tunisia for their remarkable diplomatic efforts in negotiating and ensuring the adoption of Security Council resolution [2532 \(2020\)](#) echoing the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire during these challenging times. Regrettably, the delays experienced in agreeing on a final text also underlined the shortcomings of virtual meetings, and we feel that the Council would have been quicker to react if negotiations could have been held through direct exchanges.

In this context, we welcome the fact that the Security Council is going back to in-person meetings. As the only body entrusted with ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security, we strongly believe that daily interactions are an essential part of the work of the Council and greatly contribute to its effectiveness. We also look forward to going back to having non-Council members delivering statements in the chamber rather than submitting electronic copies online, and we encourage the Estonian presidency and future presidencies to explore and implement options to that end.

Malta also welcomes the progress made with regard to the level of interaction with non-Council members. The presentation of priorities at the beginning of each presidency and the wrap-up sessions at the end have now become a monthly appointment, and these events give the wider membership the opportunity to interact directly with Security Council members. The fact that efforts have been made to ensure that these meetings continued virtually and were very well attended during the pandemic shows that they are appreciated and of added value to the wider membership.

Annex XX**Statement by the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations, Craig John Hawke, on behalf of Angola, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Rwanda, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Spain, South Africa, Sweden and Uruguay**

We are honoured to submit this statement on behalf of 35 countries, representative of all regional groups, that have had the privilege of being elected by the General Assembly to serve on the Security Council over the past decade: Angola, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Rwanda, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Spain, South Africa, Sweden and Uruguay.

Elected members, past and present, continue to have a particular interest in the working methods of the Security Council. Getting working methods right and making them fair is essential to the work of this body. It goes to the heart of its performance and its accountability to the broader United Nations membership and to the Charter of the United Nations. Good working methods, big and small, help to create an enabling environment for each and every Council member to be fully involved, to contribute to informed discussions and to play a full and meaningful role in the Council's work. This becomes even more important when there is disunity in the Council on an issue and seemingly no space for a political solution.

The unprecedented impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic required the Council to adapt its working methods to ensure business continuity while maintaining the required transparency. We thank Estonia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for convening this meeting to reflect on the lessons from this time for the future. We welcome this opportunity and, in line with your concept note, would like to share some current as well as longer-standing observations and proposals, in the hope that they are given due consideration by Council members.

- We commend the Council's efforts to return to in-person meetings in the chamber and look forward to the participation of the wider United Nations membership as observers of these meetings and, when health and safety permits, as participants also.
- We encourage the Council to return fully to the provisional rules of procedure of the Council as soon as possible, in order to allow procedural votes on the scheduling of meetings and the participation of briefers, for example. In this regard, we encourage dialogue among Council members towards considering virtual Council meetings as "formal Council meetings", in order for the Council to be better prepared in the exceptional event that circumstances similar to those experienced with the COVID-19 pandemic are repeated.
- We encourage the Council to continue to enable briefers to address it virtually. Remote solutions allow for Council members to invite briefers who can deliver insights from the field to add value to Council deliberations. We continue to encourage the inclusion and meaningful participation of civil society

representatives, including women, young people and persons with disabilities, as briefers.

- In the interests of the transparency and visibility of the Council's work to the broader membership, we encourage the inclusion in the Journal of the United Nations of all virtual and in-person Council meetings. We continue to encourage the President of the Security Council to conduct regular engagement with other heads of principal United Nations organs. We also encourage Council Presidents to include all informal meetings in the monthly programme of work and to continue efforts to make programmes of work as user-friendly as possible for the wider United Nations membership.
- We encourage the extra efforts made to agree public remarks following virtual meetings during the pandemic. In this vein, we encourage Council members to establish the norm of agreeing to public remarks following all closed meetings, in the interests of transparency and inclusion.
- We commend the regular discussions of the Council, including under the leadership of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, towards improving the working methods of the Council with a particular focus on transparency, efficiency and agility. We encourage continued discussions with the Secretariat with a view to drawing lessons from the Council's experience during the pandemic, to looking at improving the current circumstances and to putting in place adequate contingency planning for similar future challenges.
- We encourage Council members to be as candid and interactive as possible in the start-of-presidency briefings and end-of-presidency wrap-up sessions. Between these sessions, we encourage Council members to consider other ways throughout the month to keep the wider membership updated on the Council's work and outcome documents under consideration.
- Council members should continue to think creatively about tailoring the format and focus of meetings to secure the best chance of a meaningful outcome from the Council's deliberations.
- Council members should reflect on and have a frank discussion about the ever-increasing workload and proliferation of meetings. While noting the importance of keeping attention on situations on the Council's agenda, the Council should be prepared to be innovative and adapt its approaches to ensure that it is making best use of its time. Rather than scheduling routine meetings on every Secretary-General report, the Council should dedicate more resources to acute crisis situations.
- We recognize the Council's efforts to implement note 507 ([S/2017/507](#)) and subsequent notes adopted in 2019 (from [S/2019/990](#) to [S/2019/997](#)). We commend positive steps for the early inclusion of newly elected Council members in the work of the Council.
- At the same time, we urge the Council to finally establish the principle of a fair and equitable division of labour, including the chairing of subsidiary bodies, which should be a shared responsibility of all 15 members, as well as penholdership, so that all members' insights and initiatives are best leveraged. This spirit should also apply to the negotiations of products.
- Chairs of Council subsidiary bodies should be closely consulted and involved in the deliberations on and the drafting and preparation of relevant Council outcomes and initiatives related to the committees that they chair, given their

expertise and knowledge accumulated through, inter alia, periodic travels to regions relevant to their work, which should be resumed when possible.

- The casting of, or threat to cast, a veto has a significant negative impact or “cascade effect” on the working methods of the Council, including where working methods are not applied uniformly, consistently and to the exclusion of elected members.
- When the Council agrees outcomes, it should revisit and implement them consistently, rather than only considering them at its regularly scheduled deliberations.
- Council members should continue to pursue innovative ways to engage with affected countries to ensure their participation, in particular when making decisions, as requested in the Charter, as well as with troop- and police-contributing countries, regional and sub-regional organizations and concerned countries in the case of Council sanctions committees. Without proper coordination with the main stakeholders, the full effective implementation of the Council’s decisions will not be possible.
- Council members should continue to create informal spaces for more meaningful Council discussions focused on identifying collective approaches and solutions to the situations of which the Council is seized.
- Council members should continue to promote more interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission – an advisory body to the Security Council – taking into account that the Peacebuilding Commission plays an important role in preventing the recurrence of conflict and, where possible, should consider relevant joint outcomes of the Council and the Commission.
- Council members should make better and more frequent use of situational awareness briefings.
- Council members should utilize any-other-business items in accordance with the Council’s provisional rules of procedure to ensure that emerging threats are addressed in a timely manner. The Council should do its best to close the gap between early warning and early action.
- We encourage the Council to circulate a draft programme of work ahead of adoption and to share concept notes of Council briefings and meetings with all Member States as soon as possible in order to ensure transparency and awareness of the Council’s monthly activities.
- The guidelines of the subsidiary bodies should be revised in order to allow the bodies to carry out their mandates and duties more effectively. More rule-of-law elements need to be inserted.
- Council members should continue to explore ways to develop and enhance provisions regarding Council visiting missions in an effort to promote greater efficiency and flexibility, including utilizing different composition formats when planning visiting missions, such as sending smaller groups of Council members.
- We encourage smaller groups of like-minded Council members to speak out in the form of joint oral or written statements if Council actions or press statements are blocked and no consensus is reached, in particular when it comes to pressing issues.
- The Arria-formula format evidently remains of value to Council members. In order to retain the Arria-formula’s original benefit, however, use of the meetings as a platform to influence public opinion rather than to inform Council decisions

should be avoided. In this regard, we encourage Council members to use the format in a manner not to the detriment of issues on the Council's agenda, as well as to seek balance between open and closed Arria-formula meetings.

- The Council should continue pursuing efforts to strengthen fair and clear procedures in sanction regimes of the Council in order to respect international due process standards. This could be achieved through creating appropriate, tailored review mechanisms, similar to that of the ombudsperson system pursuant to Council resolution [1267 \(1999\)](#) for other sanction regimes.
- We appreciate the efforts made by the Council to submit the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly on time. However, we encourage the Council to provide a much more detailed and analytical report, which will augur well for the objective of Council transparency and for keeping the membership well informed of Council issues.

The Security Council must live up to its own undertakings enshrined in note 507 by the President of the Security Council ([S/2017/507](#)) and subsequent notes adopted pertaining to the Council's working methods. This must be matched by a change in culture, and the courage and will to do things differently and exercise the powers conferred under the Charter of the United Nations to ensure prompt and effective action on behalf of Member States. The experience of operating in the pandemic presents a unique opportunity to look critically at the way in which the Council works and has innovated, with a view to further improving its agility – the capacity to adjust quickly to the evolution of circumstances that may impact its operation – as well as its effectiveness, efficiency and transparency. Council members have our full support in this endeavour.

Annex XXI

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Munir Akram

We thank the President for organizing this open debate of the Security Council on the working methods of the Council against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

We also thank all the briefers for their insights on the issue, in particular the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in her capacity as the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

Derived from article 30 of the Charter of the United Nations, the working methods of the Security Council have undergone a process of continuous adaptation in accordance with changing circumstances. Ever since the Informal Working Group was established in 1993, its work has been crucial in evolving the working methods.

The primary purpose of establishing the Informal Working Group was not only to enhance the efficiency of the working methods but also to increase their transparency as well as dialogue and interaction with the wider United Nations membership on Council matters. The Group, therefore, has the responsibility for striking the right balance between the smooth and seamless conduct of the work of the Council with transparency and inclusivity for the wider United Nations membership.

The provisional rules of procedure of the Council are also very clear on the issue of the participation of the wider United Nations membership and the transparency of the Council's working methods.

Rule 48 of the provisional rules clearly stipulates that "unless it decides otherwise, the Security Council shall meet in public".

Closed consultations of the Council, therefore, were envisaged to be an exception rather than the norm.

Note 507 ([S/2017/507](#)) of 2017 also reaffirms the commitment of the Council "to increase recourse to open meetings, particularly at the early stage in its consideration of a matter", in order to increase the transparency of its work.

In practice, however, the participation of the wider membership of the United Nations on matters pertaining to international peace and security appears to have been progressively restricted over the years. The Council's tendency now is to meet behind closed doors as much as possible.

The COVID-19 pandemic has opened up the possibility of utilizing new technologies and innovative methods for the conduct of the Council's business.

The use of videoconferencing has allowed the Council to continue to receive briefings and ensure the participation of the Council members despite the global shutdown during the pandemic. Its working methods have been adapted to respond to the physical constraints dictated by the pandemic.

Ideally, the use of such technologies and innovations in working methods should have allowed for greater participation in the Council.

Instead, the adaptations in the Council's working methods in the wake of the pandemic appear to have come at the expense of the ability of non-Council member States to even effectively participate in its proceedings.

The Security Council's open debates have traditionally provided an opportunity to non-Council members to physically attend and express their perspective on important matters pertaining to peace and security.

Note 507 places particular emphasis on the Council's commitment to continue to take steps to improve the focus and interactivity of its open debates.

Unfortunately, by replacing even the videoconference participation of the non-members with the submission of written statements, the working methods adopted during the pandemic have undermined one of the few available channels for participation by the wider United Nations membership on issues of international peace and security.

Furthermore, the written statements submitted by the non-members are circulated as a separate compilation and not as part of the official records of the meetings.

This runs contrary to the essence and purpose of the Informal Working Group, the successive presidential notes on working methods and the relevant provisional rules of procedure of the Council, as well as the Charter-based role of the Security Council to act "on behalf" of all Member States.

With the progressive lifting of the COVID-19 restrictions, the Council must ensure the effective and meaningful participation of non-members of the Council on matters of direct concern to them. The COVID-19-related provisions related to the participation of the non-members were exceptions – they cannot and must not become the permanent practice of the Council.

The technologies and innovations used to circumvent the physical limitations imposed by the pandemic need to be adapted to ensure greater transparency and the wider involvement of non-members.

Moreover, articles 31 and 32 of the Charter of the United Nations, which call for inviting non-member States to participate in discussions on matters of direct importance to them, within the context of the work of both the Council and its subsidiary bodies, should be fully implemented.

The work of the Informal Working Group shows that, over the years, non-permanent members have made important contributions in improving the working methods of the Council. Normally, non-permanent members have a sense of accountability and responsiveness towards the general United Nations membership as a result of being elected.

We hope that the Informal Working Group and the wider United Nations membership will continue to play their role in increasing the transparency and accountability of the Council while ensuring efficiency.

Annex XXII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, Cho Hyun

I thank the President for convening today's open debate, as well as the briefers for their insightful briefings.

The Republic of Korea commends the efforts made over the past 15 months by members of the Security Council to ensure that the Council continues to function under the pandemic-related constraints.

With the gradual stabilization of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) situation in New York, my delegation believes that it is time for us to reflect on which pandemic-inspired procedures and practices need to be retained and on where further improvements could be made, with the possible advent of similar future challenges in mind.

Moreover, in the face of a global challenge that requires of us a global response, the imperative of improving the democracy, effectiveness and accountability of the Council's work has become all the more relevant.

Against this backdrop, while aligning myself with the statement submitted by New Zealand on behalf of former elected members of the Security Council over the past decade, I would like to highlight the following points in my national capacity.

First, we must preserve and further utilize the merits of virtual meetings identified through the Council's experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual meetings have proved their usefulness in channelling the views of those working on the ground into the Council's work, and they have been helpful in facilitating high-level participation. Obviously, videoconferences will never be able to completely replace in-person interactions, but there will certainly be plenty of situations in which virtual meetings will be beneficial. With this in mind, we encourage the Council to consider treating virtual meetings as official ones, which will allow the Council to be better prepared should another exceptional situation like the pandemic arise in the future.

Second, my delegation expresses its hope that the Security Council will be able to engage in more serious discussions to limit the use of veto powers. There is wide agreement that veto power lies at the heart of the problems that undermine the Council's abilities to fully carry out its mandate. At this year's intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, the outcome document, the Co-Chairs' elements paper, stipulated in its convergence section that "a significant, growing number of Member States supports limitations to the veto". We believe that, at least, there should not be any increase in the number of rights to veto in the future Security Council reform process.

Third, we support efforts to improve the Council's working methods so as to allow for the permanent and elected members to work on a more equal footing. My delegation supports calls for the fair distribution of work, including penholderships and subsidiary body chairpersonships, among all 15 members of the Council. We also call on the Council to find ways to help improve the preparation of newly elected members in order for them to "hit the ground running" upon assuming their seats.

Fourth, efforts to improve transparency and accountability in the Council's work must continue unabated. My delegation encourages the Council to deepen its cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission, which is well positioned to help mobilize a wide range of relevant stakeholders and provide the Council with advice that encompasses the full peace continuum.

We believe that efforts should be made to maximize the number of open meetings, and in cases where closed consultations are deemed necessary, the participation of non-members that are parties to the dispute under consideration must be facilitated to the fullest extent. My delegation would also like to see more meaningful participation of troop- and police-contributing countries in the early stages of the decision-making process for missions in which their forces are involved. Last but not least, we need a formal adoption of the current provisional rules of procedure.

The Republic of Korea reaffirms its commitment to continue to work constructively with the United Nations and other Member States to help the Security Council better carry out its guiding mandate of maintaining international peace and security in a more democratic, effective, efficient and transparent manner, and with agility.

Annex XXIII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Singapore to the United Nations, Burhan Gafoor

I thank the Permanent Mission of Estonia for convening this important discussion on the working methods of the Security Council. My delegation also appreciates the leadership of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, on this issue. We thank Ambassador Inga Rhonda King; Loraine Sievers, the former Chief of the Security Council Secretariat Branch and co-author of the fourth edition of *The Procedure of the UN Security Council*; and Karin Landgren of the Security Council Report for their insightful briefings today.

Singapore has always been a strong supporter of improvements to the working methods of the Security Council. The Council is one of the most important bodies of the United Nations, with wide-ranging powers, such as its ability to impose binding obligations pursuant to chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Given these powers, the Council must therefore be held to the highest levels of transparency and accountability. Yet the myriad practices and working methods of the Council remains complex, even arcane. It is therefore important to improve the working methods of the Council for greater transparency and accountability. This benefits all States, big or small, including the permanent members. It is an area in which we can make an immediate and noticeable difference, without getting caught up in the legalities and technicalities pertaining to amendments to the Charter.

The theme of the debate today is “Agility and innovation”. I would like to highlight several points in this regard. First, we commend the Council for remaining agile and innovative in the face of the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The Council was the first main body of the United Nations to adapt its practices to ensure business continuity, including through the extensive use of videoconferences and through its modified voting procedure. The Council has also been transparent in explaining its modified practices, through the letters issued at the beginning of the month by each presidency. We welcome the fact that these letters continue to be issued. This shows that the Council is not taking its working methods for granted.

My second point is that, for the Council to remain agile, it must be responsive to the wider membership and therefore also inclusive. The results on inclusiveness are mixed. We commend the Council for regularizing the introductory and wrap-up sessions of each presidency and for formalizing them in the monthly programme of work. We are also pleased that the Council’s programme of work is now also reflected in the Journal of the United Nations and not just on the Council’s separate website. This ensures that the Council’s programme of work is widely disseminated to the entire United Nations membership and allows Member States to prepare in advance and to participate, where applicable. This is especially true for smaller States who may have more difficulty following all of the Council’s activities in detail.

However, we are disappointed that the majority of open debates continue to feature only the statements of briefers and Council members, while non-Council members who wish to participate can only submit written statements. The present debate on the important issue of the Council’s working methods, in which it would have been useful for Council members to hear the views of the wider membership, is one such example. By the time that the compendium of statements is circulated, the Council will already have shifted its focus to other issues. This defeats the purpose of open debates, as the Council is essentially listening only to itself. We therefore suggest that non-Council members be allowed to speak at all open debates, as was the

case before the pandemic. Recorded video statements should also be considered to manage time differences as necessary.

My third point is on transparency. Inclusiveness on its own is insufficient without transparency. Unfortunately, we note that the number of closed Council meetings remains high. Of 269 videoconferences held in 2020, 126 were closed. This is not counting the closed discussions that take place under the heading of “any other business”. These discussions are extremely important, as they often revolve around the most pressing hotspot issues of the day. We therefore suggest that the topics of such discussions should be reflected in the programme of work. We understand the necessity of closed meetings, as some discussions would be better facilitated in a private setting. However, Member States have the right to at least know what is being discussed by the Council and when. Otherwise, these discussions under “any other business” may as well be phantom meetings.

Fourth, innovation must be accompanied by perspective. Even as we innovate, we should not lose sight of the original purposes and intentions behind any particular initiative. The relative logistical ease of holding online meetings has resulted in a proliferation of videoconferences, high-level events and Arria-formula meetings. This in itself is not necessarily bad, and we commend all Council members for their tireless work and increased output. Nevertheless, we would stress the need for quality over quantity. In particular, the Arria-formula meetings present an interesting case. The Arria-formula meeting was originally envisaged as a platform for the Council to discuss sensitive topics with the benefit of external briefers. But recent Arria-formula meetings appear to be more divisive than consultative. The opt-out nature of these meetings, together with the recent tendency to widely publicize them in a hyperconnected social media framework, risks creating echo chambers that further divide rather than unite the Council. We believe that the Arria-formula format remains relevant to promote frank discussions and shed light on emerging security challenges. Nevertheless, we hope that Council members will avoid politicizing this tool.

To conclude, we call on all members to continue their constructive engagement in improving the working methods of the Council with practical proposals. We look forward to the analytical summary of all statements and suggestions made at this debate, and we also look forward to further outcomes of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions under the able leadership of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Annex XXIV**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, Michal Mlynár**

I wish to congratulate Estonia on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and thank it for organizing this debate on the issue of working methods of the Security Council. I also wish to commend the leadership of Ambassador Inga Rhonda King of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in guiding the deliberations of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the European Union.

Working methods, not only of the Council but also of other organs of the United Nations, have always been an issue of interest for a large number of delegations, as they are intrinsically linked to the functioning of the Organization as the global cornerstone of multilateralism. The issue of working methods has become a central one as we try collectively to overcome the various challenges that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has presented to the international community. More than one year has passed since the pandemic struck the world and, at first, brought many activities, including at the United Nations, to a standstill. However, in retrospect, we believe that the Council has shown remarkable resilience, as well as a combination of creativity and formal rigour, to ensure that it can deliberate on the matters on its agenda in a timely manner while ensuring the necessary formal requirements commensurate to the responsibilities that the Council assumes under the Charter of the United Nations.

The effects of the pandemic on the functioning of multilateral institutions or, more generally, on the conduct of diplomatic relations itself, as well as the potentially long-term changes and trends that it has induced, must be subject to a thorough reflection.

However, even at this stage, some of the working arrangements devised since March 2020 have demonstrated their value and should continue to be applied even after the restrictions on in-person meetings have been fully lifted.

First, we encourage the continuation of the practice whereby briefers join meetings of the Security Council via videolink. It enables the Council to consider the participation of a larger pool of potential briefers. Thus, the Council may benefit from a wider range of information sources and views to inform its deliberations. Joining meetings of the Council via videolink seems to be much more efficient from the point of view of the briefers as well, as it causes much less disruption to their work schedules. It is further an efficient and cost-effective solution to the logistical constraints pertaining to travel to New York for briefers based elsewhere.

Second, Slovakia has always supported efforts aimed at enhancing the openness of the work of the Security Council, including by strengthening the interaction between the Council and other Member States. In this regard, open debates have always played a central role. My delegation fully appreciates that the Council has enabled the presentation of the views of non-members of the Council during open debates held throughout the pandemic, via the submission of written statements. This approach should, in our view, continue regardless of the existence of restrictions, as it offers a very efficient combination of the full participation of non-members with the effective management of time in meetings of the Council.

Notwithstanding the specific matters that have arisen owing to the pandemic, my delegation wishes to underline the need to fully implement the existing measures

and commitments set out in the updated note 507 (S/2017/507), as well as in notes S/2019/900 to S/2019/997, all adopted on 27 December 2019. The improvement of the working methods and the pursuit of more transparency, inclusiveness, representation and accountability of the Council must remain a continuous process.

More specifically, we encourage the further strengthening of the substantive engagement of the Council with troop- and police-contributing countries to inform the decision-making of the Council and incentivize the general membership to support peacekeeping operations.

The further development of more active and meaningful relationships with the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council and other relevant bodies could increase the effectiveness of the Security Council's response to conflicts and strengthen its role in conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

Third, the work of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council is crucial for the implementation of the Council's decisions. Therefore, their working methods should be further improved, especially in instances that can affect the human rights of the persons concerned and their right to due process. This is especially relevant for the various sanctions committees, considering, inter alia, the judicial review sanctions to which decisions have been subject in various jurisdictions.

The role of the non-permanent members in shaping and codifying Security Council working methods has proved to be very valuable and constructive. I would like to wish the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Informal Working Group all success in guiding the important endeavours of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

Annex XXV**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations on behalf of the Group of Like-Minded States on Targeted Sanctions**

I thank the Estonian presidency and thank Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions for convening this open debate. I also thank the briefers for their remarks.

This statement is on behalf of the Group of Like-Minded States on Targeted Sanctions: Austria, Belgium, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

Ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council includes the strengthening of fair and clear procedures and due process for United Nations sanctions regimes.

While underlining that sanctions remain an indispensable tool for the Security Council to address global security challenges, the Group considers that the United Nations must take a leading role in devising sanctions with adequate safeguards to protect the rights of those listed under its sanctions regimes.

Acts of transposition of United Nations sanctions have been and continue to be scrutinized by national and regional courts around the world. Fair and clear procedures at the United Nations level are necessary to avoid any gap in the abilities of Member States to implement United Nations sanctions, which in turn is critical for ensuring the effectiveness and legitimacy of the sanctions.

The Office of the Ombudsperson is mandated to review cases from the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list only. There are 13 other sanctions committees, for which there is no independent and effective system to review listings. Due process concerns exist, therefore, in relation to other Security Council sanctions regimes. Courts and tribunals are increasingly facing questions in relation to sanctions regimes without an ombudsperson mechanism and have underlined their lack of due process protection.

For this reason, we ask the Council to address these concerns in an agile and innovative manner by considering the option of creating a review mechanism that provides a protection equivalent to the Ombudsperson for other sanctions regimes while taking into account their specific context. To support these discussions, the Group submitted proposals to the Security Council on 11 June 2021.

Key elements of fair and clear procedures for a context-sensitive mechanism include:

- o Access to a review mechanism for designated individuals and entities
- o Access to counsel for the designees
- o An impartial and independent review of the evidentiary base on which designations are made and maintained
- o A binding decision on maintenance of a listing or delisting

The goals of the Office of the Ombudsperson and the proposed independent review mechanism are fundamentally the same – to provide fair procedures for designated individuals and entities. Both entail impartial review, both must be independent and both require a meaningful hearing and engagement with petitioners. Both are intended to improve the accuracy, effectiveness and legitimacy of sanctions regimes.

The Group also would like to reiterate that there are a number of other options available, such as extending the mandate of the Ombudsperson to all sanctions regimes or enhancing the Focal Point for Delisting into an independent and effective review mechanism. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has demonstrated that the Council can be innovative, agile, flexible and creative. We urge the Council to use this spirit going forward to improve the due process protections for its sanctions regimes.

- With regard to the Office of the Ombudsperson, the virtual conversation entitled “Strengthening due process within the United Nations sanctions System”, held on 17 December 2020, demonstrated and acknowledged the achievements of the Office since its establishment. The mechanism has proved its value in the safeguarding of the human rights of individuals.

The Office of the Ombudsperson should be able to carry out its mandate in an independent, impartial and effective manner, as set out in Security Council resolution [2368 \(2017\)](#). The members of the Group are concerned that this independence is being undermined by the current contractual status and institutional arrangements of the Office of the Ombudsperson within the Secretariat.

We therefore also urge the Secretary-General and the Security Council to strengthen the capacity of the Office of the Ombudsperson and to make the necessary arrangements to ensure its continued ability to carry out its mandate independently and effectively. The Office must also be given the necessary resources and support.

The Group urges the Security Council and the Secretary-General to continue their efforts to improve the Council’s working methods by ensuring that due process is guaranteed and that human rights are respected, both in the process of imposing sanctions and in subsequent implementation measures. The Group stands ready to support these efforts to improve United Nations sanctions in the future in order to ensure that sanctions continue to be an effective tool for the Security Council in contributing to the maintenance and restoration of international peace and security.

Annex XXVI**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group**

I am pleased to submit this statement on behalf of the 27 members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group: Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Jordan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Maldives, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sweden, Uruguay and Switzerland. One of the core objectives of the Group is to encourage better working methods in United Nations organs, in particular the Security Council. We thank today's briefers for their statements and commend the efforts made by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in its capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions.

The focus of today's open debate could hardly be more timely, as Headquarters in New York is progressively moving back to in-person meetings following the unprecedented operating challenges caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. As in so many other fields, the COVID-19 pandemic put to the test and laid bare the strengths and weaknesses of the Security Council's working methods. The Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group is convinced that we cannot go back to the status quo ante – we must not miss the opportunity that this crisis has generated to consolidate the strengths of the Council's working methods, address its fundamental flaws and build on the innovations.

We are grateful for the opportunity provided by this open debate for our Group to make several proposals towards these objectives while working towards enhancing transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council.

If there is one main lesson to be drawn from the crisis, it is that working methods are of existential importance for a functioning multilateral system. After the COVID-19 pandemic rendered physical meetings impossible, adapting the working methods to the new situation has been essential for the Security Council in order to ensure business continuity and COVID-19 pandemic discharge of its mandate. Doing so as quickly as possible is also a key responsibility of the Council to the wider United Nations membership, on whose behalf it acts.

The Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group thus welcomes the leadership by successive presidencies in adapting the working methods to constantly evolving circumstances during the crisis. We equally welcome the constant engagement on working methods, either within the framework of the Informal Working Group or with regular discussions under the heading of "any other business". We also look favourably on the trend of addressing issues related to working methods during opening and wrap-up sessions, including with the direct participation of the Chair of the Informal Working Group. The Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group calls on the Council to keep this positive momentum and focus on the constant improvement of working methods as we move back to the Council chamber. Expediting the adoption of the eight draft notes of the President currently being discussed in the Informal Working Group would be an important contribution towards these goals.

A second lesson to be drawn from the last fifteen months is that this crisis has forced people and institutions to adapt and innovate. The Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group would like to commend the Security Council members that have taken innovative initiatives in the field of working methods. We see great merit

in considering the present crisis as a positive opportunity to make permanent some recent adaptations, provided that they reinforce the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Security Council under normal circumstances also.

Among these adaptations, there is no doubt that the virtual meetings allowed for greater high-level participation of representatives from capitals in Council meetings. The Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group sees merit in considering maintaining, whenever appropriate, the possibility of the virtual high-level participation of all United Nations members and combining it with in-person meetings of the Council. Such hybrid formats would not only enhance the inclusivity of the Council's work but also provide more equal opportunities for all Member States to be represented at a high level. The holding of virtual meetings has also enabled the participation of some civil society briefers who may otherwise have been unable to visit New York in person, a practice that the Group encourages. We also invite the Security Council to continue the practice of the written circulation to all permanent missions of all statements made by briefers and Council members during open meetings, including explanations of votes during the adoption of resolutions. Furthermore, the Group calls on the Council to continue the positive momentum towards the continued institutionalization of wrap-up sessions, a clearly noticeable trend in the past two years. We call on Council members to continue to work towards the improvement of this well-established format, in particular with regard to the interactivity and substance of discussions, and to draw from the proposals contained in the non-paper on wrap-up sessions of the Group dated 14 June 2021.

A third lesson to be drawn from the COVID-19 pandemic is that there is still room for improvement if and when the Council is faced with another situation requiring extraordinary adaptations to the functioning of the Council. The Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group calls on the Council to actively engage in contingency planning, including on the basis of – but not limited to – the proposals made by the Chair of the Informal Working Group. In doing so, the Council's primary objective should be ensuring that such contingency plans allow the Council and its subsidiary organs to carry out all aspects of its work, in particular by enabling the Council to vote virtually and in real time on both substantive and procedural matters, in line with article 27 of the Charter of the United Nations and with the provisional rules of procedure, and to ensure the creation of official meeting records for public Council meetings that would reflect the meetings verbatim. We regret that, during the current pandemic, health restrictions impacted the inclusivity of the Council for both non-Council members and other stakeholders. It is crucial that the participation of civil society representatives, in particular women and young people, be strengthened in all circumstances.

Furthermore, as the digitalization of our societies is accelerating, the Council would be remiss not to harness the potential offered by technology in order to better function in any circumstances. While we reiterate our strong preference for the participation of non-Council members through their physical presence at Headquarters, it cannot be excluded that situations necessitating the use of virtual participation at meetings could emerge in the future. For those circumstances (and indeed while open debates continue to be conducted virtually), we urgently need to find a solution to enable non-Council members to participate fully and directly in virtual open debates. For both normal and extraordinary circumstances, the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group also reiterates its invitation for the Council to explore the possibility of receiving more dynamic virtual briefings (including data-based presentations, visualization and augmented reality) and of conducting virtual Council visits to the field as a complementary instrument to existing and established physical visits.

The Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group would also like to reiterate its call on the Security Council to give due consideration, in its annual report, to the impact of the pandemic on international peace and security and the Council's work and tools, possibly through a dedicated section with an overall and cross-cutting analysis of the matter.

As the pandemic acutely demonstrates, the working methods of the Security Council are of interest to the whole United Nations membership and the way to guarantee its readiness, agility and inclusivity in the face of any crisis. Improving them is our collective responsibility, especially as the Security Council – just like all of us – will not have the excuse of “not seeing it coming” when extraordinary circumstances of a similar magnitude to the COVID-19 pandemic are on our doorstep. Drawing lessons from the pandemic and implementing improvements are thus a matter of urgency.

As recent progress as well as shortcomings in responding to the COVID-19 crisis show, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness are mutually reinforcing principles that must continue to guide improvements in the working methods of the Security Council. The Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group is committed to doing its part and actively contributing to and supporting any initiative towards this end.

Annex XXVII

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations

Ukraine highly appreciates the initiative of the Estonian presidency of the Security Council, in collaboration with Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, to hold this open debate and expresses its gratitude to the briefers for their presentations.

The recent discussion of the Security Council report that took place at the plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 11 June proved again that the wider United Nations membership attached the utmost importance to improving the working methods of the Security Council to achieved greater transparency in the Council.

Ukraine has always been among the proponents of a more transparent Council. During our membership in the period 2016–2017, we did our best to contribute to further opening up the Council's activities and enhancing the role of elected members. Some of the priorities of Ukraine are reflected in the updated presidential note 507 (S/2017/507), including on making the Council's field visits more transparent.

From its recent membership experience, the delegation of Ukraine would like to highlight some approaches that we consider relevant today, including against the backdrop of the challenging circumstances of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

1. The Council should conduct its work in the open as much as is practically possible. Closed consultations should be the exception rather than the rule. In this regard, we are glad to see that more and more Council discussions are held in the open format. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the modalities of the Council's interaction with non-Council members for the worse, as the open format has been limited in most cases to the submission of written statements. Under these circumstances, one could hardly expect the views expressed by non-Council members to be heard well enough, let alone taken into account.
2. If consultations are held, the outside world deserves to know what was discussed. Thus, it would be highly appreciated if the practice of summarizing the respective discussions for further presentations to the media were further developed.
3. The consideration of the reports of the Security Council to the General Assembly remains one of the most visible aspects of interaction between the two bodies. The need to enhance the analytical perspective of reports as well as their forward-looking approach is widely recognized among the Member States and should be duly addressed by the Council.
4. We remain staunch supporters of the practice of formal monthly wrap-up sessions of the Council. In this regard, it is necessary to find ways to seek the input of Member States on issues on which they would like Council members to reflect during such wrap-up sessions.
5. We encourage the timely issuance of monthly assessments, as they constitute a valuable source for preparing annual reports.
6. It always useful for Council members to consult with the countries concerned and the wider United Nations membership, if necessary, on the draft decisions under consideration by the Council. This could certainly make the responsibilities envisaged by such decisions much more feasible.

The working methods of the Council are what Council members do every day. Nothing is set in stone, and positive change is possible and is happening, albeit at a rate slower than desired.

We are convinced that the Council should utilize its precious time more effectively, giving due attention to the issues on the agenda primarily aimed at upholding respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Member States, addressing and preventing armed conflicts, and facilitating the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means in accordance with chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.

The use of the so-called “veto” remains one of the most divisive issues. Unfortunately, repeated vetoes have stained the Council’s reputation almost to a point beyond repair. In particular, we see a clear lack of implementation of both the spirit and the letter of article 27(3) of the Charter.

In this regard, while a “veto-free” Council is still a distant and uncertain reality, we do believe that a Council member also should not resort to the veto and must abstain from voting when it is party to a conflict that is under consideration by the Council. Otherwise, the use of the veto will prompt legitimate concerns over impartiality in exercising the responsibilities and privileges of a permanent member.

We will obviously pursue this issue within the intergovernmental negotiations process in the General Assembly, but any voluntary pledges or actions in this regard in the Council would be warmly welcomed and could facilitate the restoration of the Council’s credibility.

In conclusion, let me restate that any effort to increase the openness and transparency of the Council will be strongly supported by the wider United Nations membership, including Ukraine.

Annex XXVIII

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations

The United Arab Emirates thanks Estonia for organizing this open debate on working methods. We also extend our sincere appreciation to Karin Landgren of Security Council Report and Loraine Sievers for their briefings, both of whom contribute a great deal to the transparency and understanding of the Council's working procedures, as well as Ambassador Inga Rhonda King of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for her leadership of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

The pandemic showed the capacity of the Council to adapt in ways that would not have been imaginable before, because it was necessary for the Council to continue to meet and to fulfil its mandate. The Council adopted procedures that would have seemed improbable before the pandemic, such as the adoption of resolutions via a written procedure in lieu of meetings in person.

But the pandemic also revealed certain limitations, as demonstrated, for example, by the difficulty in formulating an initial response to the pandemic and calling for a global ceasefire.

Since they were only intended to be temporary, the pandemic working procedures did not provide for all necessary procedural dimensions of the Council's work that were part of the Council's practice and procedure prior to the pandemic.

As the Council moves to a return to more in-person meetings, it is time to reflect on which of the Council's "temporary, extraordinary and provisional" measures are worth retaining in some form and how to do so, on which measures worked less well, and on what the post-pandemic "new normal" should look like. It is also important for the Council to decide how it will transition from the pandemic working procedures.

The United Arab Emirates puts forward the following suggestions for the Council's consideration.

First: the Council's adaptation to the pandemic demonstrated that it is capable of adapting when it has no choice. But it also showed that the Council could not have adapted without the technology of today. Careful and nuanced consideration is required, not only so that the Council's every day work can continue to benefit from the latest technology and innovation but so that peace operations in the field can also benefit.

Second: the use of virtual meetings platforms makes it possible for the Council to hear more regularly from those in the field and also directly from Governments in countries on the Council's agenda, as well as from ministers and leaders. The Council should ensure that the post-pandemic working methods preserve those valuable avenues for more inclusive and dynamic engagement, including with hard-to-reach field locations. Accessing a wider range of views would also be valuable in the context of mission transitions and drawdowns, when the Council needs to be invested in securing the gains made and sustaining peace.

Third: the Council could explore the possibility of conducting virtual visits to countries on its agenda, including those hosting peace operations. These would not replace in-person visits but would complement them to make sure that Council members can interact directly with relevant stakeholders in a time-efficient manner. In-person visits are invaluable, and the interpersonal relations developed during such

visits are very useful. But if the physical presence of Council members cannot be arranged, the Security Council should consider organizing virtual visits.

Fourth: while there are some clear benefits of virtual meetings, the future status of meetings conducted virtually (whether in whole or in part) requires clear clarification as to whether they should be considered official or not and how all dimensions of the provisional rules of procedure will be applied.

Fifth: the decrease in the participation of women in the Council's work over the past year is concerning, especially since they have been hit the hardest by the impacts of the pandemic. Going forward, the Council and Member States should work to ensure adequate access and space for both the formal and the informal engagement of women.

The United Arab Emirates looks forward to playing a constructive role and engaging closely on working methods during our forthcoming Council membership in order to contribute to the Council's efficiency, effectiveness and transparency. The United Arab Emirates is optimistic that a return to greater diplomacy in person, including between Council experts, will make it easier to achieve more unanimous agreement on Council outcomes.
