

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 3 October 2023 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the pleasure to inform you that Brazil, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of October 2023, will hold a high-level debate on the theme “Peace through dialogue: the contribution of regional, subregional and bilateral arrangements to the prevention and peaceful resolution of disputes”, to be held on 20 October, at 10 a.m. in the Security Council Chamber.

In order to guide the discussions on this topic, Brazil has prepared a concept note, which is contained in the annex to the present letter. I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Norberto **Moretti**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Ambassador



Annex to the letter dated 3 October 2023 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on the theme “Peace through dialogue: the contribution of regional, subregional and bilateral arrangements to the prevention and peaceful resolution of disputes”, 20 October 2023

Overview

In his policy brief entitled “A New Agenda for Peace”, the Secretary-General describes a “deep sense of unease” at the global level, with grievances that have “sown distrust in the potential of multilateral solutions”. Restoring trust and reinvigorating diplomacy has become one of the greatest political challenges of our time and is essential to strengthening international action that is perceived as both legitimate and effective.

In the policy brief, the Secretary-General further recognizes that “trust is the cornerstone of the collective security system”. Indeed, distrust can hinder efforts towards building an environment more conducive to cooperation, dialogue and mutual understanding. In addition, he emphasizes the “crucial” nature of preventive diplomacy, as well as the fact that “diplomacy at the global level must both reinforce and be bolstered by regional frameworks that build cooperation among Member States”.

A bottom-up approach to this urgent task would entail a firm and practical recognition that regional, subregional and bilateral efforts in confidence-building, preventive diplomacy, mediation, good offices and support to political processes may, and often do, complement or supplement the Council’s proper discharge of its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

Resorting to the positive experiences of regional, subregional and bilateral arrangements should be a key part of the collective endeavour to build confidence and, as a consequence, to maintain international peace and security.

In some cases, it could be translated into giving enough political space and time for those efforts to be carried out and for them to succeed. In others, it may require incentive from the United Nations. In yet other cases, confidence will have to be built through actions that can help conflict parties trust each other’s intentions. In a number of circumstances, it will entail providing active support, both political and material, to other actors and arrangements better positioned to prevent or peacefully resolve a given dispute. The United Nations, in general, the International Court of Justice and the Security Council, in particular, have done so in the past and continue to do so today. However, renewed energy in this endeavour is urgently needed.

Background

The Security Council has a broad mandate for the peaceful settlement of disputes, outlined in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. These include the means listed in Article 33 (negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, among others) as well as the ones identified in Article 36 which enable it to recommend procedures or methods of adjustment.

More attention needs to be paid to those tools in the Council, which, for several reasons, including insufficient preventive action in some cases, tends to focus on

Chapter VII measures. For example, out of the 54 resolutions adopted in 2022, 29 contained a direct reference to Chapter VII and others used language that could be characterized as Chapter VII actions.

At the regional and subregional levels, tools for the prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes have continued to be developed and deployed with encouraging success. Despite the increase in the number of armed conflicts in the recent past, there is no shortage of examples in which regional or subregional mediation and diplomacy have brought rivals together peacefully.

This has been visible in recent inter-State efforts, such as the Ethiopia-Eritrea summit of 2018. The same applies to intra-State dialogues, such as the Colombian peace process, which started in 2012 with the involvement of the United Nations and several countries, including Brazil, as well as the Philippines peace agreement of 2014.

Going back even further, Latin America in the twentieth century provides additional examples of creative initiatives in preventive diplomacy, mediation and the peaceful settlements of disputes. Some involved the creation of limited ad hoc groups of interested countries, such as the Contadora Group (Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela, in 1983) in support of a Central American peace process, later broadened to the Rio Group, the first exclusively Latin American political coordination forum. The peaceful settlement of a territorial dispute between Ecuador and Peru, in 1998, with the support of guarantor countries Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States, is another successful example in this regard.

In other cases, political coordination has coalesced around a specific topic, such as in the Treaty of Tlatelolco (1967), by which the Latin American nuclear-weapon-free zone was established. In still other cases, diplomatic groupings dedicated to conflict prevention have been multiregional since their inception, as is the case with the zone of peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic. Around the world, the nuclear-weapon-free zones of Pelindaba, Semipalatinsk and Rarotonga have also acted as confidence-building measures, boosting transparency and promoting stability.

The nature of these arrangements can and do vary greatly, from the highly technical to the purely political. In South America, for example, political entities, technical organizations and economic integration organizations work in a layered structure that has helped to prevent large-scale inter-State conflict for close to a century.

Even seemingly strictly technical entities, such as the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, have contributed to increasing trust and transparency and strengthening peace and security in the region and globally. Many of the successes described above were enabled by the political will to transform bilateral or regional dynamics from rivalry to cooperative behaviour.

Often, regional and subregional arrangements or groups of concerned countries have helped to support those processes or provided those frameworks. These inter- and intra-State examples illustrate that, as in the past, regional, subregional and bilateral arrangements can be effective in helping to counter the current global trend of increasing rivalries and divisions. In some cases, those arrangements can bring greater impartiality and help to sustain momentum in negotiations, in particular at moments in which domestic circumstances make it difficult for parties to remain engaged or take difficult political decisions.

Trust is therefore built through multiple processes and requires the engagement and political will of various actors at the global, regional and subregional levels.

Objective

The search for peace is a collective duty. In this time of systemic crises, the international community must work towards revitalizing the Security Council and exploring new ways of building a safer and prosperous future for all. Before the need to resort to Chapter VII arises, the international community should seek to apply the tools available under Chapter VI of the Charter. This has been done in a successful way through regional, subregional and bilateral arrangements. The international community should resort to its positive experiences in order not only to improve the effectiveness of the Security Council but also to bring peace back as the world's most valued common goal, using those experiences as important tools in confidence-building processes.

Against this backdrop, a debate is proposed on the guiding questions below.

Guiding questions

- How could Chapter VI tools be better used for reducing tensions and preventing disputes from escalating?
- How can confidence-building measures adopted by regional, subregional and bilateral arrangements help in the maintenance of international peace and security?
- How can the Security Council better cooperate with such arrangements or pre-emptively encourage them?
- Bearing in mind A New Agenda for Peace, what could be the role for these arrangements in a reformed collective security mechanism?

Briefers

To be confirmed
