

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
4 April 2024

Original: English

**Letter dated 2 April 2024 from the Permanent Representative of
Malta to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of Malta, the Security Council plans to hold a debate on 17 April 2024 on the theme “The role of young persons in addressing security challenges in the Mediterranean” in connection with the item entitled “Maintenance of international peace and security”.

In this regard, Malta has prepared the attached concept note (see annex). I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vanessa **Frazier**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 2 April 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council debate on the theme “The role of young persons in addressing security challenges in the Mediterranean”, to be held on 17 April 2024 at, 10 a.m.

I. Background

The Mediterranean serves as a microcosm of the multifaceted challenges that other regions around the world are facing. As in other places, the Mediterranean faces security challenges, such as political instability, socioeconomic inequality, transnational threats and maritime security. Collectively, these challenges further amplify fragility. They constitute a key obstacle to peace and security and to sustainable development.

All too often, responses to security challenges are undertaken largely or solely through traditional security arrangements or ad hoc solutions. However, responding to these phenomena in a holistic manner must include joint efforts to promote security cooperation, address the root causes of these challenges and mitigate their consequences.

These difficulties cannot be addressed by countries individually. While sound national policies have an important role to play, a more holistic and collaborative response is needed to deal with these threats in a timely and effective manner. These responses should encompass conflict resolution and prevention, humanitarian aid, development cooperation, climate action and long-term sustainable solutions.

Such actions are crucial to protect citizens and give them the opportunity to fulfil their legitimate aspirations. We must seek to meet the needs of individual persons and invest in creating the right conditions for peace and stability. To do this, we need to build on the foundation of our societies: youth.

In addition, the Mediterranean is one of the regions most sensitive to climate change. It is experiencing higher temperatures, prolonged heatwaves, droughts and wildfires. These increasingly frequent phenomena are threatening agriculture, water resources and public health. Coastal communities are vulnerable to sea level rise, erosion and inundation, posing risks to infrastructure, tourism and biodiversity. Intensified storms, floods and desertification disrupt traditional livelihoods, exacerbate food insecurity and trigger population displacement at a time of rapid population growth.

Moreover, young women and girls are disproportionately impacted. Women and girls are economically vulnerable and bear the brunt of health risks, lacking access to clean water and sanitation facilities, and they are often marginalized in climate change decision-making processes at the local, national and international levels; climate change exacerbates food insecurity for them and their families, disrupting educational opportunities.

By placing additional strains on communities in the region, especially those already grappling with protracted conflict, transnational organized crime and human rights violations, these phenomena interact with, and negatively compound efforts towards, the promotion of regional peace and security. Until now, responses have lacked the necessary level of ambition that such an existential challenge requires, relying primarily on traditional arrangements or ad hoc solutions.

Furthermore, there is often the tendency to overlook the potential and agency of young persons, despite them being among the most disproportionately affected in the face of these pressing challenges.

The Mediterranean region hosts a diverse and dynamic youth population, constituting one third of the total population of the region, who have the potential to be agents for positive change in peace and security in the region, including in conflict prevention, reconciliation processes, peacebuilding, and countering radicalization and violent extremism, as well as in promoting human rights, the rule of law and sustainable development. Young persons therefore have a central role to play in the fight against climate change. They have been at the forefront of efforts to demand urgent action on sustaining peace and addressing climate change. They have the potential, the knowledge and the drive to devise adaptive measures and innovative solutions to this challenge that is especially consequential to their generation. Achieving the full, effective, inclusive, diverse and meaningful participation of youth in decision-making is therefore paramount.

Nevertheless, young women and men continue to be marginalized, undervalued and unrecognized for their capacity to contribute to peace and security. Despite actively contributing to building peaceful and inclusive societies, young women remain insufficiently engaged in peace and security processes.

Overcoming these negative perceptions is crucial to harnessing the full potential of young persons in decision-making during peace processes and in other matters related to peace and security. Furthermore, challenges persist as young persons grapple with political exclusion; limited economic, educational and employment opportunities; and a shrinking civic space. Moreover, climate change further compounds these challenges, adding urgency to the need for comprehensive solutions.

This growing recognition of young persons as agents of positive change, particularly in peace and security, has gained momentum with the establishment of the youth, peace and security agenda following the adoption of Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#). The Security Council subsequently adopted two follow-up resolutions, [2419 \(2018\)](#) and [2535 \(2020\)](#), in which it urged Member States to consider ways to increase inclusive representation of young persons in decision-making at all levels, including possible integrated mechanisms for young persons to participate meaningfully in peace processes and conflict resolution.

The youth, peace and security agenda also recognizes the critical need to engage young persons as partners in decision-making processes on peace and security, including in political negotiations that have a direct impact on their lives and future. While progress has been made, a more systematic approach to implementing these resolutions is urgently required. Furthermore, despite the positive contributions of young persons around the world to climate action as well as to peace and security, the intersection of peace and climate change has yet to be reflected in the youth, peace and security agenda.

In his third report on youth and peace and security ([S/2024/207](#)), the Secretary-General highlights advancements in institutionalizing the youth, peace and security agenda, with many Member States and regional organizations developing new strategies and initiatives to promote the inclusion and meaningful participation of young persons in peace and security affairs. Nevertheless, it also highlights gaps in the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda, including in peacekeeping operations and special political missions, as well as the lack of funding for youth-led peacebuilding.

Furthermore, in his report entitled “Our Common Agenda” ([A/75/982](#)), the Secretary-General issued recommendations for meaningful, diverse and effective

youth engagement both within and outside the United Nations, including through better political representation. The New Agenda for Peace underscores the active role young persons play in decision-making, including peace and security initiatives, and advocates the institutionalization and funding of the youth, peace and security agenda.

II. Objective and guiding questions

At the pivotal juncture of the Summit of the Future to be held in 2024 and the implementation of the New Agenda for Peace, and as part of Malta presiding over the Security Council in April 2024, the high-level debate aims at highlighting the multifaceted challenges being faced in the Mediterranean, while exploring the role of young persons in peace and security in the region and how to integrate youth and peace and security principles, including into climate action, in order to foster a unified approach towards climate-responsive peace and security.

Member States are invited to address the following questions in their interventions:

- What can the Security Council do to effectively address security challenges in the region, which pose a threat to young persons and future generations, and to advance the climate-security nexus?
- How can the Security Council further advance the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda and ensure the full, effective, inclusive, diverse and meaningful participation of young persons in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, post-conflict efforts and transitional justice, particularly in the Mediterranean? What lessons learned and best practices found in other regions can further advance the youth, peace and security agenda?
- What role can regional and subregional organizations play in the effective implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda?
- In what ways can the Security Council, United Nations peacekeeping missions, the recently established United Nations Youth Office and other entities effectively integrate the youth, peace and security agenda within the United Nations?
- How can the international community go about developing a holistic approach in addressing climate security that takes into account regional challenges while also supporting efforts at the global level?

III. Format

The debate will be chaired by the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade of Malta, Ian Borg.

Briefers will include:

- A United Nations briefer (to be confirmed);
 - The Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, Nasser Kamel;
 - A civil society representative.
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