

**SECURITY COUNCIL TOLD 'WAIT AND SEE' ATTITUDE NOT ACCEPTABLE IF IT WISHES
TO REMAIN AT FOREFRONT OF MAINTAINING INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY**

**Debate on Working Methods Hears Calls for Review of 'Anachronistic' Practices,
Greater Transparency, Interaction with Non-Members, Access to Subsidiary Bodies**

Improving transparency, interaction with non-Security Council Member States and the efficiency of its activities were some of the issues addressed by speakers during a day-long debate in the chamber today on the body's working methods — the fourth ever held on the subject.

"The number and complexity of situations that the Council has to follow require an increasingly demanding managing capacity of its programme of work," said the representative of Portugal, whose delegation holds the Council's presidency for the month. "However, in today's world, with the new threats and challenges to peace and security emerging, the Council has to look ahead, be able to anticipate crisis and devote enough time to conflict prevention. And, for that, it needs to work continuously on its working methods to increase its efficiency and be able to fully exercise its responsibilities," he said.

Along with other representatives of the Council's five permanent members, the delegate from the United Kingdom agreed on the package of improvements needed to revitalize the body, contained in document S/2010/507, adding that room remained for further action on those and other areas.

The Council must be flexible regarding new technologies, he stressed, noting that social media networks had played a critical role in the "Arab Spring". If the Council wished to stay abreast of developments, it should consider using available new technologies, by which rapid assessments on the ground could enable the body to act more quickly. A "wait and see" attitude would become less and less acceptable if the Council wanted to remain at the forefront of maintaining international peace and security, he said.

Bringing the Council into the twenty-first century was a common thread during the debate, with many speakers supporting the proposals of the S-5 Group, the group of five "small" countries (Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland) formed specifically to support improvement of the Council's working methods. Speaking on the Group's behalf, Switzerland's representative said that the Council's current working methods, dating to provisional rules of procedure adopted at its first meeting in 1946, were neither adequate nor sustainable.

The S-5 Group encouraged the Council's five permanent members, the "P-5", to review anachronistic practices, including the distribution of chairmanships of subsidiary bodies only to

elected members. Taking note of the P-5 position that working methods were a matter for the Council only, Switzerland's speaker favoured such sole responsibility only if working methods were improved, as without that, calls for reform would strengthen, and the Council's relevance would diminish.

India's representative said the Council's composition and working methods were "divorced from contemporary reality of international relations" and that it operated counter-productively, detracting from its effectiveness and efficiency in implementing its mandate.

Questioning the concept of "pen holding" and the "monopoly of permanent members" over it, he added that briefings often left open questions. His suggestions included a call for full implementation of Articles 31 and 32 of the United Nations Charter, through closer consultation with non-members of the Council. He also argued for systematic access for non-members to subsidiary organs of the Security Council, including the right to participate. Ever greater transparency was needed, as was an end to closed meetings with no records.

Several Council members, while expressing support for many suggestions, maintained that closed meetings with no records would remain necessary. France's representative said that, given that the majority of Council meetings were held in public or semi-public formats and that the number of open debates had increased, the public format for meetings should be enhanced. Further general improvements should include provision by the Council presidency of ample information to Member States and individuals useful to them in conducting their work.

While praising progress already made, including improved relations with the wider United Nations membership, most non-Council members and elected members proposed a range of suggestions. South Africa's representative noted that while progress had been made in enhancing and strengthening the partnership with the African Union, efforts of conflict prevention, management and resolution needed to be further addressed. He suggested that the African Union and the Council could benefit from regular contact, using video technology to link the Presidents of each body.

Echoing a broad message that minor changes to the Council's working methods would not address larger issues, he urged widening the current membership. Germany's representative agreed, saying that focusing only on working methods was merely a "bandage approach" when the Council really needed to more fairly represent the United Nations membership.

With many speakers praising the growing number of public meetings with experts and special envoys, the representative of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said the quantitative increase should be matched by a qualitative one, in which more meaningful exchanges of views were taken into account to allow contributions by non-Council members.

Monthly assessments of the Council's work should also highlight cases in which it had failed to act, including the reasons for resorting to the veto and the views expressed by members during deliberations, he said. In addition, annual reports to the General Assembly should elaborate the circumstances under which the Council adopted different actions, since the

Assembly must be made aware of the rationale, reasons and backgrounds surrounding every decision.

With many speakers calling for enhanced interaction with troop-contributing countries and host Governments, Finland's representative, speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said troop contributors should be more closely engaged at all stages of decision-making of peacekeeping operations, starting from the planning of their mandates.

Also speaking today were the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russian Federation, Gabon, Colombia, Nigeria, Lebanon, China, Brazil, United States, Guatemala, Japan, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Slovenia, Australia, Costa Rica, Luxembourg, Morocco, Spain, Sudan, Malaysia, Singapore, Iran, Belgium (also on behalf of the Netherlands) and New Zealand.

The meeting began at 11:06 a.m. and was suspended at 1:20 p.m. Resuming at 4:10 p.m., it ended at 5:50 p.m.

Background

As the Security Council held its fourth open debate on its working methods, it had before it a concept note, (document [S/2011/726](#)), submitted by the Permanent Representative of Portugal, November's Council President, which states that the Council has made efforts over the last two decades to enhance its transparency and efficiency, among other things through its Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions (the Working Group). The meeting will build on the April 2010 open meeting, which preceded the adoption in July 2010 of note [S/2010/507](#).

The concept note suggests that transparency, interaction with non-members and Council efficiency should be the principal themes for discussion, with the aim of identifying ways of improving in those areas. Interventions should aim at a constructive debate over the recent practice of the Council, including on the extent to which note S/2010/507 had been implemented.

Suggested questions concerning transparency, interaction with non-members and efficiency to be addressed in the discussion include the following: the importance of strengthening the trend of meeting more often in public; useful ways to increase efficiency in open debates; enhancing interaction of the Council with such actors as concerned States or parties, and regional and subregional organizations; making Council interaction with troop-contributing countries more substantive; enhancing the role of the Military Staff Committee; and improving Council interaction with the Chairpersons of the Peacebuilding Commission and its country-specific configurations.

The aforementioned note S/2010/507 addresses 13 areas relating to Council practices: the agenda, briefings, documentation, informal consultations, meetings, the programme of work, resolutions and presidential statements, subsidiary bodies, matters of which the Council is seized, communication, Security Council missions, the annual report and newly elected members.

Statements

IVAN BARBALIĆ (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that, as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, his country had organized a workshop on working methods. The Working Group had held four meetings and had begun looking at ways to reduce the list of issues under active consideration. The “evenness” of the Council’s work had also been discussed, in particular pertaining to mandate cycles and reporting. During the 28 April meeting on General Assembly revitalization, a number of Member States had expressed interest in possible ways of involving them in matters of the Council’s working methods. His country had suggested that the Working Group consider the idea of holding regular briefings on Council working methods for non-Council Member States.

He said the Council had achieved substantial progress in recent years regarding the improvement and openness of the working methods. Implementation of note S/2010/507 should be based on the need to find a proper and adequate balance between generally accepted principles or guidelines on efficiency, transparency, and interaction and dialogue with non-members. Underlining the importance of informal interaction with the wider membership, he said such interaction was an added value to the Council’s decision-making process. There was room for the Council to enhance interaction with other United Nations bodies, such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Further, the annual report should be more analytical and substantial.

Transparency should also imply increased transparency concerning the broader public, non-governmental organizations and the media, he continued. The Arria formula meeting was an adequate tool for engaging in a more informal dialogue with the United Nations membership, concerned countries, regional and subregional groups, experts, representatives of civil society and the media.

VITALY CHURKIN (Russian Federation) said conducting the meeting was, in itself, adding to improving transparency, as the Council was at the service of the international community as a whole. However, in working groups of the Council, questions had been raised on wider topics, including fulfilling the Council’s mandate and issues highlighting that the Council had been encroaching on the work of other bodies. The Council should concentrate on issues where it could take specific decisions, he said. While the Council used United Nations Charter provisions to apply sanctions, he said, preventive diplomacy should be more fully utilized. Sanctions and the use of force were only appropriate when prevention efforts were fully exhausted, he said.

He said careful work must be done on the issue of the veto. The Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions had been conducting work in an organized, constructive manner involving all United Nations Member States. However, any proposals to increase transparency should not result in the Council’s effectiveness being undermined. Improving the Council’s cooperation with other organizations was another area highlighted. The practice of operative consultations with Security Council member States and troop-contributing countries had taken place. On 1 December, his country would assume the Council presidency for the month and he invited all to a meeting on the work of the Council. At the last such meeting held, his country had extended 117 invitations, but only 8 members had showed up, he concluded.

MARTIN BRIENS (France) said efforts had already been made to enhance working methods, but there was room for further improvement. For instance, the presidency should provide Member States and individuals with enough information to help them conduct their work. Given that the majority of Council meetings were held in public or semi-public formats, and that the number of open debates had increased, he suggested that the public format for meetings should be enhanced. The initiative of the United Kingdom and France had led to a regular dialogue with troop-contributing countries. It was also important the Council meet with the head of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

In demonstrating its ability to adapt to new realities, the Council had been drawing up its own agenda and rules of procedures, in line with changes on the ground, he said. Among many examples were thematic debates to define approaches to issues pertaining to peace and security, and drawing on regional expertise and civil society. The Small Five (S-5) Group (Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland) recommendations should also be implemented regarding the Council's activities. Regular exchanges with the Department of Political Affairs had provided the Council with information that helped to prevent conflict. As a result, the Council was now better at following crises, including the situation Democratic Republic of the Congo. Wide participation on that issue could be used in the future.

Work in the future could be improved, including on missions, with more communications with on-the-ground personnel. Using video conferencing would allow the Council to be informed in real time. The Council had drawn up new meeting formats to better exchange views with Member States, including many meetings with personnel in Chad, for instance. He encouraged the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions to draw up more useful recommendations.

ALFRED MOUNGARA MOUSSOTSI (Gabon) noted progress already made in improving working methods and underlined the need for enhanced cooperation between the Council and regional and subregional organizations in managing crises and armed conflicts. Prompt deployment of missions to countries facing instability that threatened peace and security could be a mechanism of crisis management and conflict prevention, he said.

Bolstering consultations between the Council and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, would, among other things, guarantee more efficacious action in the short, medium and long term, with an aim of lasting peace. He also suggested improving the Council's interaction with troop-contributing countries, as their role was indispensable to peacekeeping missions. Regular exchanges with other United Nations organizations would reinforce transparency and confidence in the Council's work. Highlighting the evolution of the Council's work, he said the thematic debates organized by members holding the presidency had been a significant contribution in examining the multifaceted challenges to international peace and security.

NÉSTOR OSORIO (Colombia) said direct contact with organizations and countries was needed to provide information that would otherwise be unavailable, and new technologies could be used to that end. The Council's open debates had contributed to improved transparency, notably the participation of non-member States, which enriched discussions with Council members before they adopted decisions. Time should be made available for Council members to incorporate those views into their decision-making actions.

It was essential that meetings were organized with sufficient notice, including with appropriate background information, he said. Meeting with interested countries at the beginning and end of the month was useful, but the Council should have other sources of information, he said. He endorsed the notion that the focus on working methods should include transparency, interaction with non-members and the efficiency of the Council's work.

KIO SOLOMON AMIEYEOFORI ([Nigeria](#)) said that, although the Council had done much to improve the efficiency and transparency of its work and the dialogue with non-Council members, more should be done in that regard to enhance greater confidence of Member States and the public. The annual report should be improved, for instance, and the broader membership should be consulted before drafting the introduction. Council Presidents should speak more often to the media. The Presidents of the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council and the Security Council should sustain their regular discussions and chairs of subsidiary bodies should more often communicate with non-Council members. Welcoming better interaction with troop-contributing countries and regional organizations, he stressed the importance of consulting before renewing mandates, or when the situation on the ground deteriorated fast.

He said Council field missions had been very useful and Council considerations had been enriched through contacts with local actors on the ground. It might be helpful to enhance the duration of such missions, he suggested, so that there would be ample time for contact with local actors. It was important to continuously identify gaps in note S/2010/507 and make required changes to it. Council effectiveness in preventing conflicts should be enhanced, including through the application of Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter.

PETER WITTIG ([Germany](#)) said the regular general briefings by the Department of Political Affairs were an important improvement, particularly in the context of the "Arab Spring". They allowed the Council to be more flexible and responsive to evolving situations on the ground. The sanctions committees' working methods had become more efficient and transparent, including through the establishment of an Ombudsperson. There had been some discussion on selection procedures and the accountability of expert panels. That discussion should not result in delaying the work of new experts, or in any infringement on the independence of experts. Further, expert reports should be made public. Germany had held an informal meeting with the wider membership before drafting the introduction to the latest annual report of the Council to the General Assembly. Improving the involvement of non-Member States stakeholders, such as regional organizations, could be done through the Arria formula. He also hoped that the Military Staff Committee's work could be enhanced.

He said the relationship between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission had become more interactive. Progress had also been achieved in enhancing the relationship with thematic Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, such as the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict. The Council had greatly benefited from their analysis, as well as from briefings provided by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. The Council should be more open towards an enhanced relationship with the Human Rights Council. While supporting several concrete proposals to enhance the work of the Council, especially those proposed by the S-5 Group, he said that focusing only on working methods was a "bandage approach". The Council should be made more representative of the United Nations membership, he said.

NAWAF SALAM (Lebanon) commended the important follow-up by the S-5 Group and their proposals. Even though the Council had developed its working methods a lot over the past few years, including in the area of transparency, improvements should continue, he said. That should include the issue of membership and the right of veto. Through its open debates, Council members should also listen to the opinions of non-members on pressing issues.

He welcomed the coordination meetings with police and troop-contributing countries, which should be further strengthened, he said. Contacts should also be strengthened between the Security Council and other United Nations organs. Its annual report and monthly reports should include more analytical details. Holding monthly briefings for Member States was one beneficial practice. However, approaches to documentation issues should be enhanced, with the goal of preparing all six official languages on time.

DOCTOR MASHABANE (South Africa) welcomed the improvements and progress on working methods, including the improvement in increasing the number of public meetings and briefings by special envoys. While those measures were important steps to improving the work of the Council, more needed to be done to ensure those actions would translate into strengthened relationships with Member States. Increased interactions with the Peacebuilding Commission were positive, but those changes should be made permanent.

Progress had been made in enhancing and strengthening the partnership with the African Union. However, conflict-prevention, -management and -resolution efforts needed to be improved. The two bodies could benefit from regular contact, with video technology used to link the Presidents of each. Minor changes, however, to the working methods of the Council would not address such issues as the current membership of the Council, which should be more representative.

HARDEEP SINGH PURI (India) said the Security Council's composition and working methods were "divorced from contemporary reality of international relations" and that it operated anachronistically and counterproductively, detracting from its effectiveness and efficiency in implementing its mandate. The Council needed to address the question of why many of its decisions failed to have the desired effect, why many Member States did not respond to requests for reports on coercive decisions and why Chapter VII measures were applied so often when measures under Chapter VI or VIII would be more appropriate. He called for recognition by the "P-5" of the need for reform to improve its representation, and to improve the processes and approaches underpinning its working methods. Greater transparency was needed, as was an end to closed meeting with no records. He questioned the concept of "pen holding" and the "monopoly of permanent members" over it. He added that briefings often left open questions. He also found it strange that the term "failed to adopt" was used by the United Nations Department of Public Information to describe the use of vetoes on draft Council resolutions.

He suggested amending procedures to ensure items could not remain permanently on the Council agenda and urged consideration of issues to be rationalized, preventing the erosion of the limited time at the Council's disposal. He went on to call for full implementation of Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter, through closer consultation with non-members of the Council, and argued for systematic access for non-members to subsidiary organs of the Security Council, including the right to participate. He said troop- and police-contributing countries should participate fully in decision-making on peacekeeping operations, and countries with specific interests in agenda items should be consulted before adoption of any outcome documents. He also urged the Council to refrain

from encroaching on the General Assembly's mandate, to make more serious efforts to achieve "peaceful settlements of disputes through measures under Chapter VI", and to cooperate more closely with regional organizations.

YANG TAO (China) said today's discussion allowed the Council to hear the opinions of the wider United Nations membership, in particular of developing countries. China had always supported improving the working methods aimed at enhancing efficiency and transparency, and better implementing its Charter mandate of maintaining international peace and security. Innovative measures, such as informal interactive dialogue, gave an opportunity to discuss sensitive matters with other countries involved.

He said there was still room for further improvement. Note S/2010/507 should be fully implemented. The Council and the other organs of the United Nations should carry out their work according to their specific mandates in synergy, without duplication of efforts. The Presidents of the Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should continue their regular contacts. The Council could benefit from consultations with regional organizations when considering and drafting measures in the area of preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention.

MARK LYALL GRANT (United Kingdom) said the Council had a responsibility to ensure that it was equipped to deal with all matters of peace and security as efficiently as possible. The United Kingdom had made contributions to the process of improving working methods by strengthening the Council's focus on conflict prevention. His country had also started use of video technology, in order to get briefings from missions on the ground. That had spared Special Representatives a two-day trip to New York. He encouraged the Council to create more opportunities to hear advice from the Peacebuilding Commission and the Military Staff Committee.

The Council should not be afraid to address matters that did not work, he said, and should welcome more ways to increase transparency. He supported Arria formula meetings and informal briefings in opening up to non-Council members. He regretted that, due to the position of some Council members, expert reports were not made public. However, many discussions must be held without record behind closed doors between the 15 Council members, he pointed out. The dialogue with regional bodies needed to become more strategic.

It was important that the Council was flexible regarding new technologies, he stressed. Social media networks had played a huge role in the Arab Spring. If the Council wished to stay abreast of developments, it should consider use of new technologies and a robust presence online. Information and communications technology could also be used to get fast assessments of situations on the ground and could enable the Council to act quicker. A "wait and see" attitude would become less and less acceptable, if the Council wanted to remain at the forefront of maintaining international peace and security.

MARIA LUIZA RIBEIRO VIOTTI (Brazil) said work that had been done to enhance transparency could greatly benefit from further interaction and dialogue with the wider membership. It was essential that non-members' voices be heard and taken into account, in particular on decisions especially relevant to them. Enhancing the Council's outreach to non-members would greatly contribute to strengthening the credibility of the organ and increase

effectiveness of its decisions, especially concerning the implementation of resolutions by all Member States.

When the use of force was authorized by the Council, Member States were accountable to the Council, she said. An objective discussion was needed to ensure such accountability. Reports on military operations should also be required. Some of those shortcomings in the working methods could not be fully realized without real reform, including changes in the current power structure. For the Council to be aligned with current political realities, it should be enlarged in the permanent and non-permanent membership, with increased representation of developing countries. Such a comprehensive reform would bring a “fresh start” to the Council and give rise to a new and improved dynamic in its daily work, she concluded.

ROSEMARY DICARLO (United States) said the Council should be able to address the challenges of the twenty-first century. In adopting its rules of procedure, it recognized the needs of non-members to be properly informed. Steps had already been taken to enhance transparency, including open debates and discussions. Subsidiary bodies, such as counter-terrorism committees, had also held more open meetings. The Council had also aimed to increase the role of troop-contributing countries.

Making the work of the Council more efficient required an effort by all, she said. All Council members and non-members should convey messages succinctly, so that as many speakers as possible could share their perspectives. She welcomed hearing constructive comments that would help to assess transparency, dialogue and efficiency issues.

GERT ROSENTHAL (Guatemala), associating himself with the statements on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the S-5 Group, said a timely and useful practice was the interaction with the broader membership through briefings at the beginning and end of each presidency. He also stressed the need to improve interaction between the Chairs of the committees and working groups with all Member States and emphasized the importance of interaction between Council members and their respective regional groups. The Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), for instance, received a monthly report of Council activities, thanks to the delegations of Brazil and Colombia. Those reports, however, could be more candid.

He said rationalization of the programme of work was also an aspect that could be considered. There was progress on disclosure and availability, but the Council’s time allocation to its routine work could be improved, allowing for more opportunities to consider the prevention and resolution of conflicts. The rationalization of the Council’s agenda was still an incomplete work. Despite progress made in establishing a procedure for the elimination of items, concrete results still had to be produced.

PAUL SEGER (Switzerland), speaking on behalf of the S-5 Group (Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland), said that while the Security Council’s main tasks remained unchanged, the ways of performing those tasks had changed dramatically due to technology and the faster flow of information. The Security Council’s current working methods remained dictated by the provisional rules of procedure, dating from the first meeting in 1946, or by informal traditions, he said, adding that those were neither adequate nor sustainable, and the S-5 Group had been formed specifically to support improvement of Council working methods and achieve greater legitimacy, transparency and accountability.

In 2006, the Group had tabled a resolution with recommended measures and the Council reacted with note [S/2006/507](#), a “milestone” that had been updated in 2010. However, implementation had been inconsistent. He called for adoption of an action plan to improve the consistency of implementation of the note’s recommendations. He also recommended additional measures to enhance the Council’s authority and effectiveness, and said the S-5 Group had presented a new draft resolution to improve implementation of note [S/2010/507](#), as well as adding new measures. Those included the involvement of chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission’s country-specific configurations in informal consultations, as well as in relevant debates of the Council, the improvement of drafting of mandates, strengthening of cooperation with troop- and police-contributing countries and reviews of progress based on clear criteria. It also encouraged the “P-5” to review anachronistic practices, including the distribution of chairmanships of subsidiary bodies only to elected members, and the P-5 taking the lead on nearly all country-specific resolutions. Taking note of the P-5 position that working methods were a matter for the Security Council only, he said that such sole responsibility could only remain if working methods were improved, as without that, calls for reform would strengthen and the Security Council’s relevance would diminish.

KAZUO KODAMA ([Japan](#)) said the discussion on working methods was crucial to ensuring prompt and effective action by the Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as securing the wider support of the United Nations membership in implementing its decisions. Continuous attention and effort, including through the better use and implementation of note [S/2010/507](#), were vital in achieving improvements. Achieving real progress in improving working methods, which were one of the five key reform issues identified by the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, required continuing and sincere efforts by the Council, alongside initiatives led by Member States. In that context, Japan highly appreciated the dedication shown by the S-5 Group.

Underlining the Council’s efforts to increase transparency and improve efficiency, he noted a number of areas of progress, including its dialogues with troop- and police-contributing countries and the Peacebuilding Commission, which were reflected in note [S/2010/507](#). Under Japan’s initiative, a comprehensive handbook on the working methods of the Security Council — known as the “green book” — had been compiled to assist newly elected Council members and the wider membership in understanding the Council’s working methods. Nonetheless, improvements were still needed in the monthly assessment made by the Council Presidents on its work. That, in turn, would allow for a more substantive annual report. At the same time, the Council must also recognize that interaction with concerned parties was necessary for prompt and effective actions. Further improvements in working methods would not be achieved without the cooperation of its permanent members. To that end, periodic reviews of the progress would also be necessary.

ZEID RA’AD ZEID AL HUSSEIN ([Jordan](#)), supporting the S-5 position, focused on paragraphs 18 and 19 in the S-5 draft resolution, which covered the use, or threat of use, of the veto. Article 24(2) of the Charter said the Security Council had “primary responsibility” for the maintenance of international peace and security and an obligation to act, although there had been no consensus between the permanent members and the rest of the membership on whether or not “primary” was equal in meaning to “exclusive”. Similarly, Article 24(2) stated “shall” act, not “may” act or “should” act. It was an obligation, and that had to be read together with Article 1(1), which contained the phrase “in conformity with the principles of justice and international law”. The question that then arose was what happened if the veto subverted the Council’s ability to fulfil its responsibilities under Article 24(2) and to uphold the principles of justice and international law in

accordance with Article 1(1). “Are we not entitled, or even obliged, to look towards an understanding that reconciles these provisions?” he asked.

When voting against measures otherwise agreed upon by a majority of the Security Council, he called on members, particularly permanent members, to explain how their position was consistent with the Charter, principles of justice and international law. That was particularly important when there were serious allegations of crimes being committed which threatened international peace and security. He was not calling for a Charter amendment to have the veto abolished. The veto had an important role, but that role should now be reconciled with Articles 1(1) and 24(2), which should no longer just be overlooked. He suggested that permanent members consider refraining voluntarily from the use or threat of use of the veto altogether, in situations where there were serious allegations of genocide, crimes against humanity and grave breaches of international humanitarian law.

MAGED A. ABDELAZIZ ([Egypt](#)), speaking also as Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, underlined the importance of improving the Council’s working methods as reflected in the relevant paragraphs of the Bali Final Document ([A/65/896-S/2011/407](#)) adopted at the Movement’s XVI Ministerial conference in May 2011. The Movement expected that the Council’s upcoming annual report to the Assembly would reflect in detail the activities and conclusions of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. The Movement appreciated the Council’s steps to publish its updated programme of work and tentative forecast in a timely manner, as well as the practice of several Council Presidents of briefing the wider membership at the beginning of each month. It looked forward to the start of the complementary practice of holding informal wrap-up sessions.

Further welcoming the personal initiative of some Presidents in preparing a comprehensive and analytical assessment of the Council’s work, he said that, when institutionalized, that practice would provide a more coherent account of how the Council’s work evolved. Those monthly assessments should include cases in which the Council had failed to act, including the reasons for resorting to veto and the views expressed by members during deliberations. The annual report should also elaborate the circumstances under which the Council adopts different actions, since the Assembly must be aware of the rationale, reasons and backgrounds surrounding every decision. The Council should also submit, pursuant to Articles 15(1) and 24(3) of the Charter, special reports for the Assembly’s consideration.

Ultimately, reaching an agreement on permanent rules of procedure to replace the current provisional rules in force for more than 60 years would be an initial and major concrete step towards improving the Council’s working methods, he said. At the same time, the Council’s subsidiary organs should be established in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Charter. Those organs should provide adequate and timely information on their activities to the general membership. The “missing institutional balance” between the Council and the Organization’s other principal organs must be restored. Regular interactions between the Presidents of the Council, the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council were also needed to coordinate the agendas and programmes of work of those bodies.

CHRISTIAN WENAWESER ([Liechtenstein](#)), aligning himself with the statement on behalf of the S-5 Group, said the S-5 Group advocated a systematic use of the mechanisms available to the Council to ensure accountability for the most serious crimes under international law. A thorough assessment should be the basis of decision-making. Although primacy should be given to national jurisdictions, the Council should ask more frequently for effective national proceedings.

As there had been a consistent problem with the execution of arrest warrants, the Council should be willing to take action to make established accountability mechanisms effective. Where there was involvement of the International Criminal Court, the Council should insist on the cooperation by those States who had a legal obligation in that respect.

Attention should also be paid to financial support of, for instance, International Criminal Court investigations mandated by the Council, he said. Having those costs borne by the States Parties to the Rome Statute was neither sustainable, nor did it speak to the genuine nature of action taken by the Council. Noting that over the past 11 months, permanent members had twice exercised the veto to block Council action in response to the most serious crimes under international law, he said permanent members of the Council should refrain from the use of the veto in such cases. He called for establishing a new practice by which a permanent member could cast a negative vote without giving it the effect of a veto. While remaining open to all possible tracks to improve the workings of the Council through a pragmatic and constructive approach, he noted, however, that the response from the Council, so far, had largely been silence.

YANERIT MORGAN SOTOMAYOR (Mexico) said that improvements had been made in working methods, including in the period when Mexico had been a Council member in 2009 to 2010 and innovative and inclusive meeting formats had been used such as Arria formula meetings and interactive informal dialogues. However, implementation of those improvements had been irregular. She suggested that in order to continue strengthening the transparency, efficiency and interaction between the Council and the rest of the Member States, the speaker's list during open debates should be inverted, so that Council members delivered their statements at the end. Informal consultations should only be convened when it was strictly necessary.

She said cooperation between the Council and regional and subregional organizations should be strengthened, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter, by inviting the proper organizations to participate in public and private meetings.

She said transparent mechanisms should be established for the designation of chairs of subsidiary organs. The prevailing opacity was unacceptable. She encouraged sanctions Committees to gather opinions of Member States affected by sanctions and include those opinions in their reports to the Council. She also encouraged a stronger interaction between the Security Council and other bodies, particularly the Assembly's Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary), when considering decisions that had financial implications. Transparency and accountability in the establishment and financing of special political missions and the renewal of their mandates should also be strengthened. The Chair of the Working Group should present a report to the membership on progress in the implementation of recommendations discussed today.

YANERIT MORGAN SOTOMAYOR (Mexico) said improvements had been made in working methods, including in the period when Mexico had been a Council member in 2009-2010, and innovative and inclusive meeting formats had been used, such as Arria formula meetings and interactive informal dialogues. However, implementation of those improvements had been irregular. She suggested that in order to continue strengthening the transparency, efficiency and interaction between the Council and the rest of the Member States, the speaker's list during open debates should be inverted, so that Council members delivered their statements at the end. Informal consultations should only be convened when it was strictly necessary.

She said cooperation between the Council and regional and subregional organizations should be strengthened, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter, by inviting the proper organizations to participate in public and private meetings.

She said transparent mechanisms should be established for the designation of chairs of subsidiary organs. The prevailing opacity was unacceptable. She encouraged sanctions committees to gather opinions of Member States affected by sanctions and include those opinions in their reports to the Council. She also encouraged a stronger interaction between the Security Council and other bodies, particularly the Assembly's Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary), when considering decisions that had financial implications. Transparency and accountability in the establishment and financing of special political missions and the renewal of their mandates should also be strengthened. The Chair of the Working Group should present a report to the membership on progress in the implementation of recommendations discussed today.

SANJA ŠTIGLIC (Slovenia) said strengthening the Council's interaction with the wider United Nations membership was a critical element in the recent reform process, with open briefings and debates taking on particular importance. The wider membership should have an opportunity to share its views, which should, when possible, be reflected in the debates' outcomes, with time allotted between discussions and the adoption of relevant resolutions.

The monthly "horizon scanning" briefing was another important contribution to conflict prevention and early warning, she said, welcoming the use of available technology allowing for more field briefings and real-time reaction to the situation on the ground. The Council should emphasize the importance of the rule of law in dealing with agenda items, and special attention should be paid to protecting civilians. She urged permanent Council members to refrain from using the veto in the event of genocide, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law.

GARY QUINLAN (Australia) said he supported a Security Council that better reflected the contemporary world and was well-placed to respond to its challenges. Reform of the Council's composition was central in that regard. Improving working methods was also important. The basic mindset of the Council should be one of active accountability and deliberate transparency. The more transparently the Council undertook its work, the more accountable it was. The more responsive the Council was, the better placed it would be to meet the challenges presented by an ever more complex world.

He suggested that the Council improve its ability to deal with conflict prevention. To do so, it needed to act in an informed manner. The "horizon-scanning" briefings by the Department of Political Affairs and thematic debates were welcome practices in that regard. The Council should not stray into the prerogatives of other United Nations organs, but threats to peace and security could be complex and non-traditional. The Council's work was complementary to that of the other organs. Improving consultation with troop- and police-contributing countries throughout the lifecycle of missions and in planning transitions was also important, as was interaction between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

Endorsing a number of suggestions made for improved transparency, enhanced interaction with non-members and efficiency, he said the Council's effectiveness also depended on the performance of non-Council Member States. For them, it was necessary to take full advantage of the opportunities to engage in the Council's work. Open debates should be less formulaic and more productive, including through better reflecting what non-Council members said in the outcomes of meetings and in the Council's annual report.

EDUARDO ULIBARRI (Costa Rica), aligning himself with the statement on behalf of the S-5 Group, said that beyond reasonable margins of confidentiality, it was crucial to develop a genuine disposition to share all information not considered confidential through systematic transparency and disclosure processes. Although the Council had advanced in transparency, such advances were insufficient as they were not consolidated, much less formalized. While the number of sessions open to all Member States had increased, they were often preceded by closed meetings to negotiate agreements. The annual report, due to its length, lack of adequate synthesis and total absence of analysis, was rarely illuminating. Special reports on topics of particular relevance were strikingly absent.

He said the S-5 suggested implementation of the practice of special reports to the General Assembly; more frequent and substantial consultations with interested Member States as part of the preparation of resolutions; standardization of assessment reports at the end of each presidency; open reports by Chairs of subsidiary bodies to Member States; making Secretary-General's reports accessible to all members in the six official languages with sufficient notification; adopting a more open attitude towards external contributions; more frequent and substantive public meetings; and explanation of reasons for casting a veto, or for its possible use as a method of blocking initiatives.

SYLVIE LUCAS (Luxembourg) said that while the Council had applied numerous elements contained in note S/2010/507, it should, among other things, further develop new ways of conducting informal dialogue with non-Council member, utilize Arria formula meetings, organize a significant number of public meetings to ensure immediate transparency and improve transparency of its subsidiary bodies, notably the sanctions committees.

She said that the Council should also intensify relations with regional and subregional organizations on questions pertaining to international peace and security. She commended efforts, such as the United Kingdom's initiative to invite the Department of Political Affairs to present subjects. However, the Council needed to further strengthen its relations with the Peacebuilding Commission. She lamented that Guinea was the only country on the Commission's agenda that was not on the Council's agenda. The Commission could bring to the Council valuable information on topics, including election preparations and the interdependence of security and development.

JARMO VIINANEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland), underscored the need for regular, informative briefings for non-members of the Council, alongside interactive wrap-up sessions at the end of each presidency. Efficiency was also important, as conflicts today were more complex and the Council's agenda increasingly stretched. The Council's work would fully benefit from letting concerned Member States truly contribute to the outcomes of open debates. He welcomed the recent use of video conferencing to receive briefings, as it allowed envoys to remain in the field to continue their important work.

He suggested that the Council improve cooperation with other United Nations bodies, including the Peacebuilding Commission and, concerning mission funding, with the Fifth Committee. Troop- and police-contributing countries should also be more closely engaged at all stages of decision-making on peacekeeping operations, starting from the planning of their mandates. The Council should also continue to seek ways to improve its ability to prevent conflict and solve long-term conflicts on its agenda, which could be done through enhanced cooperation with partner organizations, such as the Bretton Woods institutions. He urged the Council to continue with its positive reform and to fully implement the innovations contained in note S/2010/507.

MOHAMMED LOULICHKI (Morocco) said improved openness, transparency and interaction had led to, among other things, more rapidly available information. Over the years, the Council had increasingly examined multifaceted situations, such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and organized crime, all growing concerns to the international community.

To improve its role, he said, the Council must have the latitude to decide on the format of its meetings. Consultations with troop-contributing countries were also important, and it was necessary to benefit from the input of those States involved in peacekeeping mandates. It was also important to draw information from the working group on peacekeeping operations and to bolster communication with the troop contributors. Commending the open thematic debates, he said the views of non-Council members should be taken into consideration. Preventive diplomacy must also be enhanced, a theme that had recently become more relevant within and outside the Council.

ROMÁN OYARZUN (Spain) said some of the measures contained in note S/2010/507 were already being implemented, but other measures, such as those on open debates, draft resolutions, presidential and press statements, informal interactive dialogues and Arria formula meetings, could be implemented better and in a more consistent manner. There was also a need to continuously update and enhance the note. He suggested the briefings by the outgoing presidency, establishment of a working group on lessons learned and the inclusion in the annual report a specific section on the implementation of the Council's working methods. He suggested further that the Council consider providing updated information about the composition of the various groups that prepared the first drafts of resolutions and that those texts be made available before introduction within informal consultations of the whole.

He said that note S/2010/507 did not contain measures regarding the veto. It should not be a problem for permanent members to commit to implementing specific measures regarding the veto that were supported by the overwhelming majority of Member States, such as explanation of reasons for the veto and refraining from using it in cases of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. He suggested establishing the practice of holding an open debate at least every two years and of updating note S/2010/507 at least every four years.

HASSAN HAMID HASSAN (Sudan), aligning himself with the statement on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said reform of the working methods was a major element of comprehensive Council reform. Geographical representation, fair to all continents, especially Africa, was also important in that regard. He suggested that the monthly programme of work should be circulated among all Member States at the beginning of the month. As for briefings, he

said that information offered by the Secretariat and subsidiary bodies of the Council should be circulated to Member States, including the slides that often accompanied the briefings. Reports of the Secretary-General should be circulated in all six official languages before the Council held consultations on the matter.

He said that although the number of open and public debates was increasing, the vast majority of Council meetings involved consultations behind closed doors. Transparency would require that countries concerned should be able to participate in consultations. Consultative meetings with regional and subregional organizations should also be organized. While welcoming the efforts of the Working Group, he suggested that its recommendations be contained in the annual report to the General Assembly. Mindful of the importance of coordination between and complementarity of the various organs of the United Nations, he said that in no case should the exclusive mandates and prerogatives of each organ be undermined.

HUSSEIN HANIFF ([Malaysia](#)) welcomed further improvement of the procedures and working methods in sanctions regimes. The rules of natural justice, however, dictated that Chapter VII resolutions should be mindful of the inherent right of individuals and entities to notice, the right to be heard and the right to be represented. He was deeply concerned about the refusal of certain sanctions committees, and by extension the Council, to share pertinent information on sanction actions affecting Malaysia.

Although progress had been made in procedures for de-listing, more could be done to ensure that listing and de-listing processes were in compliance with the basic tenets of natural justice and the rule of law, he said. It would be detrimental to the Council's interests if requests for de-listing were rejected under the guise of security, when the real reasons were politically motivated. Regarding briefings by Special Representatives, Heads of missions, Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Secretariat, he suggested that non-Council members be allowed to "hold watching briefs" without the right to interject or interact.

ALBERT CHUA ([Singapore](#)), associating himself with the S-5 Group, said that "unless improvements are made, there is a real risk that the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole will end up sounding like a broken record to the rest of the world". To remain relevant and to stay responsive to global challenges, the Council must ensure that it was accountable, transparent, inclusive and effective through reform of its working methods. "This refrain has fallen on deaf ears," he said, adding that progress in working-method reform remained uneven and slow.

He said that the Council's effective functioning not only directly impacted its relationship with the General Assembly, but also each and every Member State with a stake in international peace and security. If the Council was to act for the benefit of the wider membership, it should be willing to engage Members in an open and honest dialogue that created a virtuous cycle of feedback and effective decision-making. He suggested that the Council regularly invite Chairs of the country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission to participate in relevant discussions. The Council could also seek Member States' views on their ability to implement Council decisions. So-called open debates seemed to substitute for genuine dialogue between the Council and the wider membership. In order for the Council to send a strong and coherent message, communication between it and the wider membership had to improve.

MOHAMMAD KHAZAEI ([Iran](#)) said a major concern of his country was the excessive reliance on unlawful use of or threat of use of force by some powerful members of the Council to advance their interests, thereby endangering international peace and security. Council decisions less and less often reflected the wishes and views of the general membership and often did not even represent the genuine opinion of its own membership. Frequently, the general membership and even concerned countries were kept totally uninformed of negotiations on resolutions that directly affected them. Non-permanent members were often faced with secretive negotiations between some permanent members on important issues.

He said that quick and unnecessary resort to Chapter VII and the threat or use of sanctions in cases where no actions were necessary, were other disturbing facts that undermined the credibility and legitimacy of the Council. Sanctions should only be imposed in strict conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter. The Council's increasing encroachment on the prerogatives of the other main organs of the United Nations, particularly those of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies, as well as such technical bodies as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), was of particular concern to Member States. The Council's failure to adequately improve its working methods and decision-making processes had brought about a decline in the international public's trust in the important organ.

JAN GRAULS ([Belgium](#)), speaking also on behalf of the Netherlands, said debates on Security Council working methods had already produced better, more transparent working methods, and he urged their continuation, even if progress was halting on other aspects of the reform agenda. Presenting a set of concrete ideas to "enhance transparency, efficiency and Council interaction" with United Nations Members at large, he encouraged the monthly presidency to be "inventive and creative", pointing out that previous presidencies had instituted more public briefings, more public debates, more Arrria formula meetings and more informal interactive dialogues. That approach enhanced interaction with Member States and improved outreach to regional organizations.

When specific countries were being debated, they should be invited to debates, even if they were not Security Council members, he said, adding that that would not prevent Council members from also holding private consultations and debates. He also recommended including Chairs of Peacebuilding Commission configurations when deliberations focused on countries on the Commission's agenda, and he called for increased interaction between the Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat, especially prior to deployments and after the return of technical assistance missions. He urged the Council to consult more broadly on so-called "new" international issues, such as climate change, terrorism and piracy, and also for its subsidiary bodies to seek out external advice. He noted that the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict had granted access to the Chairs of Peacebuilding Commission configurations because those issues were commonly on their agendas, and he called for such practices to be generalized.

JIM MCLAY ([New Zealand](#)) said that full implementation of note S/2010/507 would go a long way towards enhancing transparency, inclusiveness and quality of Council deliberations. Council meetings must be open whenever possible, and clear and compelling reasons should be given for closing them. More timely, consistent and meaningful interaction with non-Council members with a legitimate stake in its deliberations should be achieved, particularly with troop- and police-contributing countries and countries on the Council agenda. Draft documents should be shared sooner and more frequently with non-Council members. Transparency and inclusiveness should be a reflex action and the norm in the Council's work.

He said there was also a need to review current Council conventions that inhibited the optimal and equitable distribution of tasks and responsibilities, such as the convention by which the P-5 alone determined the Chairs of subsidiary bodies. The Council should also draw more effectively on the expertise of relevant external actors. The veto was a truly awesome power, and greater transparency regarding the circumstances in which its holders would contemplate its use and in explaining the reasons for its use would help reassure other Member States that its holders were wielding that power responsibly. Agreement on an informal code of conduct guiding use of the veto would be a welcome initiative, he said.

Concluding the debate, Council President JOSÉ FILIPE MORAES CABRAL (Portugal), speaking in his national capacity, said the wide participation in the debate was evidence that the subject was a matter of interest to all. Debates on such matters as working methods, open to the wider membership, were of crucial importance, as the Council could collect invaluable input from the broader membership. Enhancing transparency, efficiency and interaction with non-Council members was a substantive concern, not a formal one. The question was how to make the Council more operational and effective, with better use of resources and full engagement of all its members. The question was ultimately how to underline the Council's authority through enhanced accountability, a better understanding of its decisions and a more open, participatory and efficient decision-making process.

He said much had been done on working methods, including through the Council's Working Group. Note S/2010/507 contained a set of substantive improvements. "Now it is important not to leave those collective efforts in vain," he said, adding that the commitment to monitor implementation of those measures should be intensified.

Welcoming the input of Member States, and in particular of the S-5 Group, he said that while consultations were useful to better prepare Council decisions, efforts should be made not to resort to consultations too often. Monthly briefings by the Presidents, including wrap-up sessions, should be encouraged. The Presidents should also have a more active role, including in their contacts with the press. On efficiency, he said some improvements had been made, including the use of video conferences during consultations. Some work remained, however, regarding the unbalanced workload in the monthly agenda.

As for interaction with non-Council members, he said the Council continued to avail itself of the possibility of holding interactive dialogues in informal consultations and of Arria formula meetings. Public meetings should be made more efficient, as statements were often too long. Interventions should be focused and keep within the allocated time. During public debates, Council members should first listen to non-Council members and speak after that, reflecting their relevant inputs in the ensuing outcomes.

Giving a further summary of the debate, he said that implementation of note S/2010/507 should be intensified. "The number and complexity of situations that the Council has to follow require an increasingly demanding managing capacity of its programme of work. However, in today's world, with the new threats and challenges to peace and security emerging, the Council has to look ahead, be able to anticipate crisis and devote enough time to conflict prevention. And, for that, it needs to work continuously on its working methods to increase its efficiency and be able to fully exercise its responsibilities," he said in conclusion.