



United Nations Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting

## "Unlocking the Potential of Science for Peace and Security"

Friday, 17 May 2024, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Trusteeship Council Chamber, UN Headquarters

### **Background**

The Secretary-General put forward a **New Agenda for Peace**, calling it time for a recommitment to peace. Next to immediate challenges – such as a record-surge in armed conflicts and conflict-related deaths – the Secretary-General also points out other evolutions that require timely attention, including those in the field of science and technology. For instance, the agenda states that new technologies are transforming the nature of conflict and warfare; and science and technology are changing the way we think about disarmament.

As global challenges become increasingly interconnected and technologies advance rapidly, **science has the potential to support the decision-making** of the UN Security Council and support the fulfillment of its mandate. Science does not provide ready-made solutions. It remains up to member states to find political answers to global challenges. However, science can support this process and is indeed a significant lever to promote and sustain international peace and security. It enables (1) evidence-based assessment of past and present risks and threats, (2) opportunities for prevention and anticipation based on systematic collection and analysis of data as well as (3) monitoring impact and implementation of Council decisions. Furthermore, **evidence-based, shared knowledge can promote trust**<sup>1</sup>, a core principle that also underpins the New Agenda for Peace.

The Security Council already interacts with **scientific expertise** in different ways. It invites expert briefings and receives evidence-based reports to inform its debates. It can request the Secretary-General to utilize the latest scientific knowledge and methodologies when preparing reports and briefings. The Council also integrates and embeds scientific expertise and capacity in mandates of peace operations to enhance anticipation and monitoring capacities. For example, the analysis of climate-related and other relevant data allows UN-Missions to identify hotspots, potential risks and drivers of conflict, and develop early warning and responses.

While these examples demonstrate the role that science already plays in the Security Council, there is scope for dedicated reflections on how to integrate science-based tools more systematically in the work of the Council and its missions. In the lead-up to the **Summit of the Future** in September 2024, it is therefore timely for the Council and the wider UN-Membership to come together to reflect and discuss steps to unlock the potential of science for peace and security.

### **Objectives of the debate**

The Arria-Formula meeting aims to discuss and identify concrete actions on how the Security Council can **better draw on scientific tools and knowledge to respond to existing challenges** and to **anticipate developments and risk multipliers** for international peace and security. It invites participants to explore the potential benefit of science for peace and security through enhanced integration of science-based tools with the work and decision-making of the Council, as well as in the implementation of its mandates.

This may include the following dimensions:

**(1) Improved information for the Security Council:** Science can support Council members to make better informed decisions. The Council already benefits from expert briefings and reports by the Secretary-General. There remains significant scope, however, for more systematic recourse to science. For instance, advances in the field of data science, including machine learning, raise the question of how to better utilize

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<sup>1</sup> See Security Council Open Debate on Futureproofing Trust of 3 May 2023 ([S/2023/365](#))

these technologies in support of analysis, foresight and anticipation. Furthermore, the Security Council will require increasingly profound technical understanding to operate within a changing security landscape shaped by evolutions in fields such as quantum technology or neuro-technology.

**(2) Improved implementation of Security Council decisions:** The Security Council can integrate scientific capacities and methodologies more effectively in mandates for operations or reports. For instance, science-based tools can support UN peacekeeping missions in implementing their mandates, as advances in data collection and analysis enable or will soon enable short-term forecasting (automated or semi-automated in combination with human analysis).

The meeting will also highlight and express political support for concrete efforts and initiatives undertaken by the UN System to leverage science for international peace and security.

### **Guiding questions:**

Statements should be limited to 3 minutes and focus on the following guiding questions:

1. How can science strengthen the Security Council's response to complex global challenges? Are there examples of scientific knowledge and lessons learned from existing projects and tools to address risk-multipliers preventively and anticipate relevant developments more effectively?
2. How can the Security Council integrate scientific tools and knowledge more systematically into its work and how can it work with other entities within and outside the UN System in doing so?
3. How should the Security Council strengthen specific mandates for operations and reports to better integrate scientific capacities and encourage systematic data collection and analysis? What initiatives by the UN System or scientific institutions to better use science for peace and security can be highlighted?
4. What actions and commitments can Member States and observers take to leverage scientific knowledge in the context of the Security Council's work?

### **Briefers**

H.E. Mr Thomas Gürber, State Secretary, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation will deliver opening remarks and preside over the meeting.

Briefers will include:

- [Henrietta H. Fore](#), Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator Board member, Executive Director UNICEF 2018-2022
- [Lieutenant General Mohan Subramanian](#), Force Commander, United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) (VTC)
- [Dr Sascha Langenbach](#), Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich

### **Logistics**

To inscribe on the speakers' list, please indicate the delegation as well as the name and title of the speaker to [newyork.un.teampolitik@eda.admin.ch](mailto:newyork.un.teampolitik@eda.admin.ch) by **15 May 2024, 5 pm**.

The meeting will be broadcast on UN Web TV. Interpretation services will be provided on an "as available" basis.

