

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 30 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of
Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of Indonesia, the Security Council plans to hold a high-level open debate on the theme “Pandemics and the challenges of sustaining Peace” on Wednesday, 12 August 2020.

The meeting will be chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Retno L. P. Marsudi.

In order to guide the discussion on the subject, Indonesia has prepared a concept note (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of Security Council.

(Signed) Dian Triansyah **Djani**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia
to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 30 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council high-level open debate on the theme “Pandemics and the challenges of Sustaining Peace”, to be held on Wednesday, 12 August 2020 at 10 a.m.

Background

1. Sustaining peace, both as a comprehensive process and a goal, is not an easy task for countries affected by, or emerging from, conflicts. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has magnified the challenge, particularly as countries have to respond to the immediate impacts of the crisis, often at great human and economic cost, while at the same time continuing to implement peacebuilding efforts and mitigating the new risks for fragile peace brought by the pandemic.
2. It is already clear that pandemics cannot be addressed solely as a health issue. Beyond its immediate health and humanitarian impact, COVID-19 risks deepening pre-existing social, economic and political fissures. The multidimensional disruption, with additional layers of grievances and discord at multiple levels, does not augur well for institutions, service delivery, governance, the rule of law, social cohesion and sustainable development. The pandemic is raising known risks for intensifying conflict, such as food insecurity, hate speech, mass migration, instability in border areas and the unequal delivery of basic goods and services. In some situations, these issues can create new threats to international peace and security, particularly when they arise across sensitive regional boundaries.
3. Unless effective policy actions are taken to support countries at the highest risk, the hard-won gains on the ground in peace, security, development and human rights may be reversed. The painstakingly achieved political agreements are now under stress. Economies are under enormous pressure due to consequences related to COVID-19. According to the World Bank, the number of people in extreme poverty in conflict-affected countries is expected to rise by 18 million due to the pandemic.
4. The pandemic has affected the work of the United Nations system, including peacekeeping operations, special political missions and the Peacebuilding Commission, and has disrupted their peacebuilding efforts. They, along with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, are endeavouring to adjust their operations to assist countries in addressing the pandemic. Given the enormous scale of the funding being delivered, the embedding of proper risk analysis and conflict sensitivity in their programming is critical during the pandemic to ensure that the response does not widen social divisions or put excessive stress on fragile peace, but instead supports countries in managing their own risks and building resilience to conflict.
5. On 1 July 2020, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2532 \(2020\)](#), in which it recognized that the pandemic could reverse peacebuilding gains made by countries in transition and post-conflict countries and called for all relevant parts of the United Nations system to accelerate their response to the pandemic, with a particular emphasis on countries in need. Indeed, the Council has an indispensable role in promoting and facilitating the appropriate consideration of the impact of COVID-19 in engendering effective approaches to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The Council’s attention and support in addressing the implications for sustaining peace of this and any future global pandemics are crucial.
6. Crises can also entail opportunities to work together to find solutions to shared challenges. International cooperation, collaboration and collective responsibility with

regard to principles-based multilateralism are essential. The United Nations system can strengthen the advancement of the sustaining peace agenda in the COVID-19 response by adopting a more integrated and coherent approach. The approach should involve all United Nations organs and agencies, along with crucial outside entities, such as regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society groups. A whole-of-system approach needs to be harnessed to address the multidimensional risks for peace that COVID-19 is generating. All opportunities should be exploited to unlock the possibilities for strengthening peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Objective and scope

7. The open debate is aimed at exchanging views on the impacts of COVID-19 on sustaining peace and exploring how more effective support can be harnessed for countries affected by or emerging from conflicts. The meeting will provide an opportunity for Member States to discuss ways of, and approaches to, strengthening international efforts in that regard.

8. In this context, Member States are encouraged to share their assessments of, and views on, the following questions:

(a) What are the immediate and long-term challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic poses to peacebuilding and sustaining peace for countries affected by and emerging from conflicts?

(b) What is the contribution of peacekeeping operations to support peacebuilding efforts in the time of COVID-19? How can peacekeeping operations be further supported, politically and financially, to better address the challenges presented by the pandemic? What steps can peacekeeping operations take to strengthen national resilience to be able to absorb the multiple shocks created by COVID-19?

(c) What can the Security Council, in cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission and other United Nations and non-United Nations actors, do to better support efforts by conflict-affected countries to advance peacebuilding and sustaining peace during the pandemic? What role can the Council play to support an integrated and coordinated United Nations response to COVID-19 that adopts a sustaining peace lens across the humanitarian, development and peace pillars?

(d) What is the role of regional and subregional organizations in addressing the impact of COVID-19 in the context of sustaining peace? What can the Security Council do to partner with them to more effectively reinforce peacemaking and peacebuilding?

(e) In a scenario in which the global economy is under pressure, what innovative and additional ways should be explored to ensure adequate, sustainable and predictable financing for peacebuilding? How can the partnership between the United Nations, international financial institutions and the private sector be strengthened to mobilize support for peacebuilding efforts?

(f) What are the impacts of COVID-19 on women in conflict-affected countries, and what needs to be done to support their participation and role in peacebuilding and sustaining peace?

(g) What are some of the short-, medium- and long-term policies that the 2020 review of peacebuilding architecture might recommend to help to ensure that the multidimensional impacts of COVID-19 are addressed properly as conflict-affected countries move forward to implement their national peacebuilding and development programmes?

Format and briefers

9. The high-level open debate will be held in the format of an open videoconference, to be chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

10. Member States and observer States that are not members of the Security Council will be invited to participate in the open videoconference in accordance with the principles of rule 37 and can participate upon decision through written statements. In that case, they will be invited to send their written statements to the President of the Council ahead of the meeting.

11. The Security Council will hear briefings by the following:

- Secretary-General of the United Nations
 - Former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon
 - Director of the Center on International Cooperation, New York University, Sarah Cliffe
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