



Security Council

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Letter dated 19 May 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Security Council met on 3 May, under the presidency of Switzerland, for an open debate on the theme “Futureproofing trust for sustaining peace”.

I am pleased to share with you an informal summary of the specific proposals made by Member States and speakers during the debate (see annex). This summary has been prepared by Switzerland, in its national capacity, and is not intended to reflect the position of the Council or its members. It is our hope that these reflections may prove useful in the context of the ongoing preparations for a New Agenda for Peace, reflections on the peacebuilding architecture and other relevant processes.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Pascale **Baeriswyl**
Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 19 May 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

Futureproofing trust for sustaining peace

An informal summary prepared by Switzerland in its national capacity on the open debate held by the Security Council on 3 May 2023¹

General considerations on trust

- The debate highlighted how trust is a critical enabler of sustaining peace. Trust in institutions, such as the Security Council, and their ability to deliver on their mandate was stressed as being key for them to advance efforts to achieve lasting peace. Several contributions highlighted the importance of trusting and effective relations, in particular between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. Trust between people and local, national, regional and international institutions and the normative framework that guide them has been described as a critical element of sustainable peace. Trust in scientific knowledge and facts, which enable transparent and evidence-based decision-making, was described as being critical for effective action to build and sustain peace.
- Trust must be built and must be earned. The debate identified a number of specific actions to futureproof trust, in particular in a climate of multiple and intersecting crises, geopolitical tensions and conflict. Some also deplored the erosion of trust between States, and in particular among some members of the Security Council.

Key messages by briefers

Norms

- The comprehensive advancement of all human rights builds trust. Full compliance with human rights is the best antidote to the inequalities, unaddressed grievances and exclusions that are often at the root of instability and conflict.
- Trust is the core of the social contract between people and the institutions of the State. People trust authorities who can be relied upon to advance economic, social, civil, political and cultural freedoms, and their rights to development, as well as to deliver justice.
- The application of normative frameworks, especially human rights, is an effective means to address the root causes of conflict.
- The Security Council and Member States should make more effective use of the trust-building potential of human rights in addressing peace and security concerns.

¹ Disclaimer: the present informal summary is not an official record of the meeting, nor does it claim to represent the positions of the Security Council or its members. See also the concept note contained in document [S/2023/283](#).

Inclusion

- Trust in peace processes requires reviewing and strengthening the institutions that ought to safeguard advancements towards sustaining peace. Yet trust in institutions, especially among youth, is dwindling.
- There is a need to operationalize inclusion as a more effective, meaningful and trust-based practice, in a measurable way.
- Innovation, digitalization and the peacemaking potential of youth need to be leveraged, investments need to be made in the participation of young people and youth networks in institutions, sustainability should be promoted through financial and technical support and young people should be encouraged to be stakeholders. Youth as co-creators are essential for shaping agendas.

Facts

- Knowledge that is trusted, available to all and transparently governed is an essential ingredient in futureproofing trust.
- Futureproofing trust requires the reduction of uncertainty by anticipating the future of peacebuilding, better connecting science and people, and holding a space that builds inclusive imagination for the future.
- Science contributes by examining how the perspectives on peace are changing among those who will govern the world in the future, and how the latest technology will shape it.

Observations by Member States*Norms*

- **Ensure the application of existing common and respected normative frameworks, based on international law, including human rights law.** Fair and consistent implementation and enforcement of norms, accountability and consistent monitoring and evaluation were mentioned as being conducive for confidence and trust-building. The Security Council should use its leverage and toolbox more effectively to ensure that normative frameworks enable the building and sustaining of peace. It was suggested that the Council could invite the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide briefings on a more frequent basis.
- **Strengthen the rule of law.** The rule of law and the observance of obligations under international law in good faith have been described as key ingredients for trust. The Security Council should deepen its discussions on how the rule of law can be strengthened and reflect the outcomes of such deliberations in the mandates of peace operations.
- **Ensure accountability.** Ensuring accountability for violations of normative frameworks was identified as an important vehicle for building trust and sustaining peace, in particular in post-conflict transitions. The Security Council should continue to promote accountability to shape more just, inclusive and lasting peace, including in relation to provisions of the Charter of the United Nations concerning the International Court of Justice.
- **Review of violations.** A review of situations in which the principles of the Charter are being violated and in which the resolutions of the Council remain unimplemented could futureproof international peace and security, as some suggested. Others highlighted that violations of normative frameworks, in particular human rights, are emblematic of an erosion of trust and ought to be

examined in the context of early warning systems. The Security Council should utilize various means available under the Charter to more effectively secure compliance with normative frameworks and prioritize targeted action to prevent and address possible escalations of violence at the earliest stage.

Inclusion

- **Realize the youth, peace and security agenda and the women and peace and security agenda.** The full, equal and meaningful participation of youth and women creates trust in processes that build and sustain peace, as mentioned by many. Youth have a vested interest in long-term peacebuilding, and their inclusion fosters intergenerational trust. The inclusion of women contributes critically to sustaining peace, as was highlighted by many participants. The Security Council should expand its efforts to realize the youth, peace and security agenda and the women and peace and security agenda, while being mindful of the meaningful inclusion of marginalized groups and groups in vulnerable situations.
- **Prioritize reconciliation.** Transitional justice is aimed at restoring trust in post-conflict contexts or after systematic violations of human rights. The Security Council should set the stage for transitional justice processes through its mandates and leverage the role of the Peacebuilding Commission role in considering transitional justice in the context of sustaining peace.
- **Leverage regional organizations and local knowledge.** Regional organizations draw on local knowledge and are quick to react. Institutions that are more effective in delivering on efforts to build and sustain peace can shore up trust. The Security Council should bolster partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations and promote close collaboration with and between the regional, subregional and local levels.
- **Promote equitable geographical representation.** There have been calls for the balancing of the representation of all geographical regions more equitably across the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. In particular, the reform of the Security Council towards more inclusivity has been described as a key element in building trust in and within the Council. The Security Council and its permanent members should work towards meaningful reform.

Facts

- **Unlock the potential of data.** Accurate data and scientific evidence help to understand and address the root causes of violence, support early warning mechanisms and conflict resolution and allow a more effective anticipation of challenges to peace and security. Trusted knowledge enables sustainable solutions. The Security Council should harness the potential of data for effective and evidence-based decision-making, while considering the potential risks, including those posed by artificial intelligence.
- **Enable trust through facts.** Independent information builds trust, enabled by freedom of opinion and of the press. The Security Council should draw on facts and trusted information in its decision-making and expand efforts to uphold freedom of opinion and of the press in the context of sustaining peace.
- **Leverage technology responsibly.** Advances in technology can be a driver of conflict as well as peace. The responsible use of technology builds confidence. The Security Council should closely examine new technologies and harness them in support of efforts to build and sustain peace, while anticipating and mitigating any possible risks associated with their development.

- **Strengthen transparency.** The strengthening and expansion of transparency and verification mechanisms in disarmament was described as leading to an increase in trust. Some added that support for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and for security sector reforms is key to building and restoring trust. The Security Council should prioritize and support actions and policies that enhance transparency.
- **Use the expertise of the Peacebuilding Commission.** A more structured and elaborate cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission was highlighted as being important for trust. The Commission plays a key role in building and sustaining peace, including by supporting nationally led prevention initiatives or in the context of transitions, and provides critical advice to the Council. The Security Council should leverage the convening power of the Peacebuilding Commission more effectively and request the Commission's advice consistently.
- **Act on trusted knowledge.** Decisive action based on scientific evidence, including in the context of climate, peace and security, was said to foster confidence in the determination of the Security Council with respect to addressing present and future challenges to peace and security. The Security Council should draw more actively on trusted scientific knowledge so as to understand, anticipate, mitigate and address risks.

Further observations by Member States

- **Prioritize adequate financing.** Trust in the ability of institutions to deliver on their mandates relies critically on the availability of adequate resources; the sustainable and predictable financing of the Peacebuilding Fund as well as African Union-led peace support operations were highlighted in this regard. The Security Council should prioritize the mobilization of adequate resources to sustain action in support of peace and security.
- **Accelerate sustainable development.** The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development addresses the root causes of violence and builds trust in the realization of sustainable peace. The Security Council should encourage and promote any efforts made towards accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Make available good offices.** Mediation efforts by representatives of the United Nations system can significantly improve trust in processes to build and sustain peace. The Security Council should promote and support such efforts.

Additional resources

- Advice from the Peacebuilding Commission ([S/2023/306](#))
- Automatic reporting on the debate provided by artificial intelligence²

² See <https://unsc.diplomacy.edu/>.