



SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT UPDATE REPORT



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PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

Expected Council Action

An open debate is expected in the Security Council on 16 July on the topic “Optimising the Use of Preventive Diplomacy Tools: Prospects and Challenges in Africa”. The meeting will be presided over by Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs Henry Odein Ajumogobia. The presence of other high-level participants including Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro and the president of the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) is possible. Also expected is participation by a representative from the World Bank (in light of the upcoming 2011 World Bank report on conflict, security and development).

A draft presidential statement is currently under negotiation.

History of Security Council Involvement in this Issue

The history of Security Council debates and action on the subject of conflict prevention and related issues is set out in detail in Security Council Report’s Update Report of 24 August 2007, *Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa*.

Readers may also like to refer to subsequent SCR reports:

- *Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa* (December 2009);
- *Mediation and Settlement of Disputes* (13 April 2009);
- *Mediation and Settlement of Disputes* (19 September 2008);
- *UN Cooperation with Regional Organisations and Sub-regional Organisations and Conflict prevention* (14 April 2008);
- *Conflict Prevention* (February 2008); and
- *Prevention of Armed Conflict* (November 2007).

Key Issues Being Raised in the Concept Paper

On 8 July Nigeria circulated to Council members a concept paper (S/2010/371) and the draft of a presidential statement. The concept paper highlighted the need for more use of preventive diplomacy and the Council’s role under Chapter VI of the UN Charter.

The paper noted the untapped potential of preventive diplomacy to transform the UN culture of “response after conflict” into “a culture of prevention”. The document called for further investment of resources pointing out that the cost-savings of such an outcome would go well beyond the economic. A number of challenges were identified, including:

- garnering the requisite political will to promote preventive diplomacy as a credible tool for the maintenance of international peace and security;
- the necessity to identify and secure reliable sources of funding to ensure the initiative can be operationalised;

- making the effort to build preventive diplomacy capacity and expertise nationally, regionally and within the UN machinery; and
- ensuring that the UN's current cooperation with regional and subregional actors is carefully coordinated in order to integrate preventive diplomacy into the architecture of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

The paper raised a number of questions:

- Who should be the beneficiaries (and what are the benefits) of preventive diplomacy?
- How to achieve agreement on a coherent policy strategy for preventive diplomacy to complement the UN's current peacekeeping model for Africa.
- How to identify and employ strategies for better resourcing preventive diplomacy activities.
- Would it be useful to have an update to the Secretary-General's 2008 report on conflict prevention in Africa possibly with an "Annex, reporting on relevant situations on the Security Council's agenda and other potential crisis situations"?
- How best to utilise the Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa to undertake a concrete initiative in partnership with the key regional actors to achieve the most suitable use of preventive diplomacy tools in specific pre-conflict situations.
- How best to draw upon resources and know-how from relevant UN agencies and regional authorities such as the AU Peace and Security Council, the Southern African Development Community and ECOWAS.
- What measures to deploy to deter conflict—could they range from promoting intercultural dialogue to more coercive techniques like targeted sanctions?
- How best to convert the current peace and security challenges in Africa into opportunities to partner with local actors, including civil society and women's organisations, to develop and implement comprehensive and realistic preventive diplomacy programmes.
- What the most appropriate preventive diplomacy tools for conflict in Africa might be.

The draft presidential statement reportedly seeks to have the Council highlight a number of issues related to the topic for the debate, including:

- acknowledging that early warning, preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment, practical disarmament measures and post-conflict peacebuilding are interdependent and complementary components of a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy;
- recognising the importance of a comprehensive strategy for prevention of armed conflict and encouraging the development of measures to address the root-causes of conflicts in order to ensure sustainable peace, while factoring in the central role of the UN;
- acknowledging the increased material, human and financial costs of peacekeeping operations over the last decade, and recognising the benefits and efficiencies that could be achieved through an integrated approach to preventive diplomacy efforts in addition to the traditional instruments of UN peacemaking;
- reiterating its support for the efforts of regional and subregional organisations, in particular regarding conflict prevention, and stressed the importance of continually engaging the potential and existing capacities and capabilities of regional and subregional organisations, as well as national governments in preventive diplomacy efforts;
- recognising the importance of enhancing coordination among relevant bilateral and multilateral donors to ensure predictable, coherent and timely financial support to optimise the use of preventive diplomacy tools, including mediation, throughout the conflict cycle; and
- requesting the Secretary-General to submit a report within twelve months of the adoption of this statement, making recommendations on how best to optimise the use of a

preventive diplomacy framework within the UN system and in collaboration with other actors.

Key Issues

It seems that the Council is no longer quite so hesitant about the thematic issue of conflict prevention and may now be open in principle to more concrete language on the subject than was possible for much of the last decade. However, a key unresolved issue is whether members are also prepared to advance the issue of conflict prevention concretely in specific cases. In this regard, the Secretary-General's recommendation in 2001 that the Council should shift from the thematic to the specific is still pertinent (see our 14 April 2008 *Update Report on UN Cooperation with Regional, Sub-regional Organisations and Conflict Prevention*).

A related issue is the increasing concern of some member states about the spiraling cost of peacekeeping. The significantly lower cost option of conflict prevention may make this question more attractive—especially against the backdrop of the current global financial crisis.

Another fundamental issue is how to finance the operational costs of better prevention— a complex issue involving not only the Security Council but also the wider UN membership.

Last but not least, Council members are aware that the issue of sovereignty often looms larger whenever outsiders (whether they are regional organisations or the UN) become involved in helping prevent conflict. This intensifies the complex issues around financing prevention capacity and the sense by many regional stakeholders that existing UN structures, whether through the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) or the Security Council, are not sufficiently inclusive.

Options

The most likely option is for the Council to adopt a thematic presidential statement.

Key options are to:

- ask the Secretary-General for an update to his 2008 report (this would ensure an ongoing consideration of the matter by the Council); and
- ask the Secretary-General to include in the report an annex, listing relevant situations on the Security Council's agenda and other potential crisis situations.

Another option would be for the Council to decide to regularly seek analysis from DPA on preventive diplomacy possibilities.

A further option would be to begin to request briefings from the chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific configurations on possibilities for and constraints affecting preventive diplomacy.

Another option might be for the Council to routinely urge national actors to highlight conflict prevention.

Council Dynamics

The African members of the Council, with leadership from Nigeria, seem determined to promote sustained discussion of the agenda item with a view to seeing substantial change in Council practice in the coming year.

African members of the Council want to highlight the need for better utilisation of pacific settlement of disputes by the Council. They see the burgeoning preventive diplomacy initiatives

being undertaken by the AU and ECOWAS as evidence of the fact that much more can and should be done by the UN as well.

Uganda, which is currently the chair of the Council's Ad-Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, has displayed consistent interest in the subject since becoming a Council member in 2009, and Uganda has the Council presidency again in October.

On 18 March President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon highlighted the need for conflict prevention and early warning systems as a means towards world security during a meeting at the International Peace Institute in New York. Gabon will next have the presidency of the Council in 2011.

There is also strong interest in this issue in the Council from Turkey (which will have the presidency in September when a summit-level meeting of the Council is expected), Brazil and Lebanon (Lebanon highlighted some of the issues during the 26 May open meeting of the Council on "Intercultural Dialogue for Peace and Security" which was presided over by Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri).

Council members who are major financiers of the increasingly costly UN peacekeeping operations (e.g. France, Japan, the UK and the US) seem to have become more open to the Council exploring and developing the potential of conflict prevention both on its own merits as a peacemaking tool and also perhaps as a longer-term cost-effective measure.

In the past China, while an advocate in general of prevention and peaceful political settlement of problems, has been cautious about preventive diplomacy in specific cases. It remains to be seen how the growing support for more effective preventive diplomacy amongst African and other G77 members will impact the discussion.

UN Documents

Selected Security Council Resolutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• S/RES/1653 (27 January 2006) addressed conflict prevention and resolution in the Great Lakes region.• S/RES/1625 (14 September 2005) was a declaration on the effectiveness of the Security Council's role in conflict prevention.• S/RES/1318 (7 September 2000) was the adoption of the Millennium Summit declaration on maintaining peace and security, especially in Africa.• S/RES/1170 (28 May 1998) established the Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.
Selected Presidential Statements
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• S/PRST/2009/8 (21 April 2009) acknowledged the role of mediation in peace processes and requested the Secretary-General to "keep it informed of the action undertaken by him in promoting and supporting mediation and pacific settlement of disputes".• S/PRST/2008/36 (23 September 2008) the Council reaffirmed the UN's role in mediation efforts and requested a report from the Secretary-General in six months on UN mediation and possible ways to improve it.• S/PRST/2007/31 (28 August 2007) requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the options for further implementation of resolution 1625.• S/PRST/2007/1 (8 January 2007) requested the Secretary-General to provide the Council with more regular analytical reporting on regions of potential armed conflict and stressed the importance of establishing comprehensive strategies on conflict

prevention.

- S/PRST/2004/44 (19 November 2004) recognised the importance of strengthening cooperation with the AU in order to help build its capacity to deal with collective security challenges.
- S/PRST/2002/2 (31 January 2002) made recommendations for achieving conflict prevention and resolution in Africa and noted that the Council would consider establishing a Working Group to monitor these recommendations.
- S/PRST/2000/25 (20 July 2000) invited the Secretary-General to submit a report on the prevention of armed conflict.
- S/PRST/1999/34 (30 November 1999) recognised the importance of building a culture of armed conflict prevention and the need for a contribution from all principal UN organs to achieve this goal.
- S/PRST/1997/46 (25 September 1997) noted that addressing the challenges of conflict in Africa required a comprehensive approach and called on the Secretary-General to produce a report to address the issue.

Selected Letters

- S/2010/371 (9 July 2010) transmitted the concept paper for the open debate on "Optimising the Use of Preventive Diplomacy Tools: Prospects and Challenges in Africa".
- S/2010/248 (19 May 2010) transmitted the concept paper for the 26 May debate on Intercultural Dialogue for Peace and Security.
- S/2008/229 (8 April 2008) was from the Permanent Representative of South Africa forwarding the concept paper on the relationship between the UN and regional organisations, in particular the AU, in the maintenance of international peace and security.
- S/2007/640 (29 October 2007) was from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia forwarding the concept paper on the relationship between the UN and regional organisations in the maintenance of international peace and security.
- S/2007/496 (14 August 2007) was from the Republic of the Congo containing the terms of reference for the Council's open debate on 28 August on conflict prevention and resolution, especially in Africa.
- S/2007/148 (14 March 2007) was from the Permanent Representative of South Africa forwarding the concept paper on the relationship between the UN and regional organisations, in particular the AU, in the maintenance of international peace and security.
- S/2005/567 (29 August 2005) transmitted the conclusions of the sixth high-level meeting between the Secretary-General and regional organisations.

Selected Secretary-General's Reports

- S/2009/189 (8 April 2009) was on enhancing mediation and its support activities.
- S/2008/18 (14 January 2008) was on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1625 (2005) on conflict prevention, particularly in Africa.
- A/60/891 (18 July 2006) was a progress report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the prevention of armed conflict.
- A/59/2005 (21 March 2005) was the Secretary-General's report *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*.
- S/2001/574 (7 June 2001) was the Secretary-General's first comprehensive report on conflict prevention.
- S/1998/318 (13 April 1998) was the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

Other

- S/PV.6322 and SC/9936 (26 May 2010) was the meeting record and subsequent press release for the debate on Intercultural Dialogue for Peace and Security.
- S/2010/2 (31 January 2010) announced the re-election of the Ugandan ambassador to the post of chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.
- S/2008/795 (18 December 2008) renewed the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.
- S/2005/828 (27 December 2005) transmitted the report on the 15 December 2005 seminar held by the Working Group on cooperation between the UN and African regional organisations in the field of peace and security.
- A/RES/60/1 (24 October 2005) was the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document.
- S/2002/207 (1 March 2002) outlined the terms of reference and mandate for the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.

Other Relevant Facts

Chair of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa

Ruhakana Rugunda (Uganda, January 2009-Present)

Relevant Past SCR Reports

- *Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa*, Monthly Forecast, December 2009
- *Mediation and Settlement of Disputes*, Update Report, 13 April 2009
- *Mediation and Settlement of Disputes*, Update Report, 19 September 2008
- *UN Cooperation with Regional Organisations and Sub-regional Organisations and Conflict prevention*, Update Report, 14 April 2008
- *Conflict Prevention*, Monthly Forecast, February 2008
- *Prevention of Armed Conflict*, Monthly Forecast, November 2007
- *Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa*, Update Report, 24 August 2007

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