

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 5 November 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, as President of the Security Council for the month of November 2015, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has scheduled an open debate on 17 November on the subject “security, development and the root causes of conflict” in connection with the item “Maintenance of international peace and security”.

To help to steer the discussion on the subject, the United Kingdom 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 the Security Council.

(Signed) Matthew Rycroft



Annex to the letter dated 5 November 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the open debate of the Security Council to be held on 17 November 2015 on the subject “Maintenance of international peace and security: security, development and the root causes of conflict”

1. Introduction

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will hold a ministerial-level open debate of the Security Council on 17 November on the topic of security, development and the root causes of conflict, in connection with the item “Maintenance of international peace and security”.

2. Context

At the summit to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015, Heads of State and Government recognized that “sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development” (General Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 35). This builds on the similar reference in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, in which it was acknowledged that “peace and security, development and human rights are the pillars of the United Nations system and the foundations for collective security and well-being” and recognized that “development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing” (General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 9). This was expressed memorably in the report of the Secretary-General entitled “In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all”, as follows: “we will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights” (A/59/2005, para. 17).

This year, Heads of State and Government also pledged that “we must redouble our efforts to resolve or prevent conflict and to support post-conflict countries, including through ensuring that women have a role in peace-building and State-building” (General Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 35).

Sustained peace and inclusive societies go hand in hand, reinforcing the links between security and development and requiring a deep analysis of the root causes of conflict in the interests of preventing conflict and preventing relapses into conflict. Some of the building blocks of inclusive and peaceful societies include access to justice for all, effective, accountable and inclusive institutions and the promotion of the rule of law. Helping States to develop their own capacities for reducing illicit arms and financial flows, combating organized crime and reducing corruption can also contribute in this regard. In addition, developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions, protecting fundamental freedoms and strengthening institutions to prevent violence, crime and violent extremism can also be considered essential building blocks for peaceful societies. A lack in these areas

can amount to contributing factors when analysing the root causes of particular conflicts.

In the statement by the President of the Security Council of 11 February 2011 (S/PRST/2011/4), the Council underlined that “security and development are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing and key to attaining sustainable peace”. In the same statement, the Council reiterated that, “in order to support a country to emerge sustainably from conflict, there is a need for a comprehensive and integrated approach that incorporates and strengthens coherence between political, security, development, human rights and rule of law activities, and addresses the underlying causes of each conflict”.

Working to break down silos

The link between the three pillars of the United Nations — development, peace and security and human rights — in the pursuit of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war and allowing all to flourish, in larger freedom, is clearer than ever before. Each part of the United Nations system plays its individual role in pursuing these goals. To respond to the current challenges facing the world, it is more important than ever before that all parts of the United Nations system, and the Member States, recognize and take account of the links between these pillars and the need to work coherently across these boundaries.

The importance of working across the United Nations system for prevention was brought out clearly in the report of the Secretary-General entitled “The United Nations and conflict prevention: a collective recommitment” (S/2015/730). The report is a stark reminder of the challenges that we face today in effective prevention, and the consequences of inaction. Prevention has been a repeated and key theme of the reviews conducted in 2015: the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (A/70/95-S/2015/446); the report of the Secretary-General entitled “The future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations” (A/70/357-S/2015/682); the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture Review (A/69/968-S/2015/490); and the global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

The Council has a key role to play in prevention. Breaking down silos across the development, peace and security and human rights pillars is central to supporting prevention efforts. Doing so will have positive effects on all three pillars. In some situations, these efforts can be regarded as peacebuilding, an area in which the Council is already actively engaged through, for example, mandates that authorize activity in security sector reform, the rule of law, justice sector reform, constitution-making, electoral reform and support. United Nations missions also have the ability to undertake quick-impact projects precisely to bridge the gap between stabilization and development. Peacebuilding has to be viewed as an inherently political and long-term process that must be supported to avoid relapse into conflict. The Secretary-General set out in his report (S/2015/730) how the United Nations system is already active and joined up on a range of these issues and will continue to support the inter-agency Task Team on Conflict Prevention, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-Department of Political Affairs Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention and wider

UNDP work, such as parliamentary strengthening programmes. The Peacebuilding Commission is also active in these areas and briefs the Council on country-specific situations.

The Secretary-General also noted, in his report on the future of United Nations peace operations (A/70/357-S/2015/682), his intention to engage the broader United Nations system, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, on how the United Nations system can collectively strengthen its conflict prevention and peacebuilding work.

Role of the Council

In the debate, the United Kingdom invites participants to explore how the Council can play its part to the fullest extent possible in further breaking down silos. Understanding that security, development and the root causes of conflict are inextricably linked opens up space for a valuable debate. The goal of that debate is to understand more deeply the shared objectives that cut across the security-development spectrum, and which require joined-up action in both the security and development areas to be effective. Peacebuilding activities and working to build inclusive and peaceful societies can be regarded as two sides of the same conflict prevention coin. Both can include working towards accountable institutions, reducing violence and corruption and protecting fundamental freedoms. Both work to support national ownership and leadership and to re-establish the primary responsibility of national authorities and build capacities to prevent conflict.

The Council's responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security. The global goals are universal. As set out above, there are overlaps and areas of shared interest. There is also a requirement for mutual support where development concerns touch on matters of international peace and security. This helps to narrow the focus of the debate. In situations of conflict or post-conflict, and in situations in which the Council seeks to support prevention efforts, participants are invited to consider how the development tools could and should be taken into account in the interests of maintaining international peace and security. Development, in the shape of institution-building and State-building (recognizing the importance of enhancing national ownership and capabilities), inclusive institutions and enhancing peace and security through security sector reform programmes, for example, is then of direct relevance to the agenda of the Council and to breaking the cycle of conflict.

3. Proposed issues for debate

The maintenance of international peace and security supports peaceful societies, which enables successful, sustainable development. Equally, sustainable development fosters peaceful societies, which in turn supports the maintenance of international peace and security. At a State level, preventive action, from institution-building to preventive diplomacy, protects and strengthens State sovereignty.

Participants are invited to offer remarks about the connections between peace and security and development, in the context of supporting the Council's prevention agenda and working to better understand the root causes of conflicts. Some of the roots of conflict stunt development and, conversely, addressing root causes is equally beneficial and important to conflict prevention as it is to sustainable development. Participants could consider how supporting sustainable development

needs an effective Council that is able and ready to act decisively and preventively. In doing so, views on how to govern the interface between security and development in matters of international peace and security would be welcome. The Council's objective is not development, per se. Rather, it is to act to maintain international peace and security; in doing so, it reinforces that the peace and security agenda and the development agenda share common aims.

An overarching question is how much more joined up the Council should be on working across the security-development spectrum, including whether this could ever amount to joint working towards shared objectives — while remembering that this is not a debate about the Council implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. What more can the Council do to promote understanding of the interdependence of peace and development, and the central importance of inclusive institutions, the rule of law and access to justice to the achievement of both peace and development?

Related questions include what more the Council should be doing to address a range of issues (root causes) that can lead to conflict and that stunt peaceful societies and prevent them from flourishing. This includes, in particular, a lack of inclusivity in policies, a lack of equal access to services, politics and government, weak and unaccountable institutions and a lack of respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. This also has to include how the Council ensures that women and girls are engaged and active in peace settlements as much as they are, and should be, engaged in gender-sensitive and youth-sensitive development programming.

Conflict-sensitive programming and political and conflict analysis are just as important where peace operations are deployed as in United Nations country team settings, especially those operating in post-conflict environments.

This debate is aimed at enhancing the Council's understanding of how its work relates to and can better support development, in particular for States making the transition out of conflict, and the range of tools at the Council's disposal for prevention. This includes all forms of peace operations, Council intervention through statements and resolutions, using United Nations regional offices, a return to horizon scanning, support from the Secretary-General's good offices and hearing from the Peacebuilding Commission.

4. Conclusion

Failure to break the cycle of conflict leads to dire developmental outcomes. People in fragile and conflict-affected States are more than twice as likely to be undernourished as those in other developing countries. They are more than three times as likely to be unable to send their children to school, twice as likely to see their children die before they reach 5 years of age and more than twice as likely to lack access to clean water.

The average cost of internal armed conflict can be equivalent to more than 30 years of gross domestic product growth for a medium-sized developing country. Marginalization, exclusion and underdevelopment can in turn increase exposure to instability. This provides fertile ground for extremism, terrorism, organized crime and conflict to thrive, as well as leading to increases in migration and refugee flows. This has implications not just for countries' internal stability but also for the

security and development of neighbouring States and for international peace and security.

Addressing the interdependence between peace and security and development, remembering always the protection and cherishing of human rights, is not optional. It is imperative that the Council be open, remain open and explore how to improve the coherence of Council action in areas that have a development component aimed at securing peaceful societies and preventing conflict, i.e. in all situations before the Council.

5. Briefers

The Secretary-General will brief the Council. Alongside him, an invitation will be extended to the current Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate/civil society representative. The full list of briefers will be confirmed in due course.

6. Outcome

It is the intention of the United Kingdom to work towards a presidential statement following the debate, which will reflect the conclusions of the debate.

7. Procedural aspects

The debate will be chaired by the United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Development as the Cabinet Minister who oversees the disbursement of peacebuilding funds by the United Kingdom and who has a key stake in its stabilization and prevention efforts. Participation by ministers responsible for similar portfolios is encouraged, both from Council and non-Council members.

Briefers will be expected to speak for no more than 10 minutes. Council members are asked to keep their interventions to five minutes and non-Council members to four minutes. In accordance with standard procedure, Member States wishing to put themselves on the list of speakers will be able to do so by registering with the Security Council Affairs Division no earlier than three days before the debate.
