



Security Council

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Letter dated 19 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the Security Council video-teleconference convened on 15 May 2020 on “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507): Working methods”. Enclosed herewith are copies of the briefings provided on that occasion by Ms. Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in her capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions; Ms. Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report; and Mr. Edward Luck, Arnold A. Saltzman Professor of Professional Practice in International and Public Affairs, Columbia University; as well as copies of the statements delivered by the representatives of Council members France, China, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam (on behalf of the ten elected members of the Security Council).

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members for this video-teleconference, the following delegations and entities submitted written statements, copies of which are also enclosed: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Guatemala, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Slovakia, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Ukraine.

Under the procedure set out in the letter dated 2 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/273), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, the enclosed briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Sven Jürgenson**
President of the Security Council



Annex 1

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, Inga Rhonda King

The Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions was established in 1993 to study and make recommendations for the improvement of the Council's practices and working methods and has since become a key framework for revising and improving the Security Council's working methods. One key mechanism for making Council working methods more accessible to the United Nations membership and the public was the agreement of the most recent iteration of presidential note S/2017/507, in 2017, under Japan's Chair of the Informal Working Group. The note summarized developments in Council working practices, including by incorporating the content of a number of separate presidential notes. Most recently, under the Chair of Kuwait, in the context of the Informal Working Group, the Council agreed to issue eight additional notes, all dated 27 December 2019, on a wide variety of subjects, such as the fair distribution of work for the selection of Chairs of subsidiary bodies among all members of the Council, the use of an unofficial addendum to the Council's provisional programme of work and the early involvement of incoming Council members in a broader range of activities. Each of the notes were negotiated and adopted in the spirit of maintaining transparency and efficiency in the Council's work. I take this opportunity to recognize the dedication of Ambassador Alotaibi and the members of the Informal Working Group that led to the adoption of those notes.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines began its tenure with a joint retreat on the working methods of the Security Council, held in January 2020 in conjunction with the State of Kuwait as the outgoing Chair. The aim of the retreat was for members of the Informal Working Group to engage in an informal dialogue that would generate concrete proposals for the way forward. Consistent with Article 30 of the Charter of the United Nations, improving the Council's working methods is a Council-led process, and the retreat presented an opportunity for members to explore in concert ideas that would result in practical proposals reflective of consensus. The joint summary, dated 3 March 2020, was issued as a document of the Security Council (S/2020/172). Several topics were discussed during the retreat, such as intra-Council dynamics, the process of drafting outcomes, the issue of penholdership, inclusion and interaction among Security Council members, the Security Council's relationship with the wider membership and effectiveness and efficiency in times of austerity, all of which were highlighted in the official summary.

During the retreat, emphasis was placed on the critical importance of the implementation of agreed working methods as compiled in note 507. At the retreat, the members of the Informal Working Group embraced the idea of action-oriented implementation of note 507 and all relevant notes thereafter. This led to a furtherance of the growing practice of written monthly commitments by different presidencies. Through those commitments, the various presidencies have recalled the provisions of note 507 and subsequent notes and have introduced different means to ensure and promote Council members' adherence.

The first meeting of the Informal Working Group of 2020 was held on 6 March and focused on the idea of action-oriented implementation, as well as the idea of striking a balance between transparency and efficiency, with the goal of enhancing the Council's effectiveness. The second meeting was held on 30 April 2020 via video-teleconference (VTC).

As we are all aware, since our last in-person meeting on 12 March (see S/PV.8745), the Security Council has had to adapt its working methods in order to maintain a state of readiness to convene and make decisions under unprecedented extraordinary circumstances. The Council's ability to discharge its mandate has come under scrutiny in this period, and measures to ensure its continuous functioning have been adopted under the presidencies of China, in March; the Dominican Republic, in April; and Estonia, now, in May.

In its capacity as President of the Council for the month of March 2020, China took the initiative — on the basis of the agreement among Council members — to set forth a written procedure for the adoption of resolutions, as well as a set of working methods for the use of VTCs by the members of the Council, as reflected in the letter of the President of 27 March (S/2020/253). To ensure the transparency of those VTCs, it was also agreed that the President would circulate, within 48 hours, a compilation document containing the interventions of the briefers and all the Council members who requested the inclusion of their statements in the document as an official document of the Council. As mentioned in the President's letter, the measures are "temporary, extraordinary and provisional" to enable the Council to discharge its mandate and will not be considered as a precedent in the future.

Under the presidency of the Dominican Republic, and in the spirit of transparency, the Council further expanded the scope of its interim measures by, *inter alia*, introducing an informal VTC plan, including the open and closed VCTs that would have usually appeared as briefings and consultations in the Council's programme of work, as reflected in the letter of the President of the Security Council of 2 April (S/2020/273). In the same spirit of transparency, it was agreed that the interventions of the briefers during VTCs moderated by the President of the Council would be streamed via United Nations webcast. Similarly, it was agreed that there would be a negotiation of press statements or elements for the press after every Council discussion and that the President would thereafter deliver any agreed elements for the press orally through United Nations webcast.

On 17 April, Council members further agreed to webcast open VTCs in their entirety; the first of which was fully livestreamed on 21 April. Moreover, under the Presidency of Estonia, the first-ever virtual ministerial-level Arria-formula meeting was held on 8 May. Most recently, the Estonian presidency has built further on the work done by China and the Dominican Republic with its own letter on working methods, dated 7 May (S/2020/372). The letter, among other things, expresses its support for the continuation of the work of the subsidiary organs of the Council to the greatest possible extent.

The extraordinary unprecedented circumstances in which we now operate have presented acute and unique challenges that go hand in hand with the responsibility to ensure that the heart of multilateralism continues to beat. This situation has provided food for thought as to how the Security Council can continue to improve its working methods regardless of the global challenge before us. In the light of the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, we must not allow the Council to be paralyzed.

Pursuant to article 24 (1) of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council acts on behalf of the Members of the United Nations. As such, the holding of this debate demonstrates that the Council attaches significant value to the voice of the United Nations membership and remains sensitive to the opinion of the wider membership about the conduct of its work. Over the years, open debates have been the flagship opportunity for the broader United Nations membership to weigh in on the working methods of the Council, with many of the interventions having been taken into consideration by the Informal Working Group in the past.

At the initiative of the presidency of Estonia, and in collaboration with my delegation as Chair of the Informal Working Group, the Council is holding its twelfth open debate on working methods, on the theme “Ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness”. The concept note (S/2020/374, annex) for today’s debate emphasizes the significance of those elements and introduces the concept of “agility” as a critical element for the effective functioning of the Council. I should note that ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness are equally critical to the work of the Council, not just during this extraordinary period, but also for the Council’s everyday functioning under ordinary circumstances. More often than not, the Council operates under normal circumstances; as such, the ability of the Council to function effectively on a day-to-day basis is similarly important.

It is timely that this open debate is taking place on the eve of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. We must approach this moment in good faith, as we contemplate how best we can improve existing practices and procedures, while identifying and exploring new areas for development. Many tools remain at the disposal of the Security Council. Those tools must be used innovatively and in the most efficient ways to allow for a fully effective Council. I look forward to hearing the voices of the wider membership and the various proposals that can be used to inform the deliberations of the Informal Working Group going forward. Our commitment to working together, not just among Council members but also in these valuable moments of constructive interaction with the United Nations membership, is evidence of our shared desire for a Council that functions transparently, efficiently and effectively. We must not allow ourselves to fall short of that ambition.

Annex 2

Statement by the Executive Director of Security Council Report, Karin Landgren

I appreciate this opportunity to address the Security Council on behalf of Security Council Report (SCR) and would like to acknowledge the work of Ambassador King of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in taking forward the considerable legacy of Kuwait's two years chairing the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions.

Security Council Report, an independent think tank, marks its fifteenth anniversary this year. Our goals were inspired by the 2005 World Summit recommendations for greater Council transparency, accountability and effectiveness and for an increased involvement of the wider membership in the Security Council's work. I thank all those who make SCR's work possible, including Council members, other Member States, United Nations colleagues and civil society.

Today I will address the matter of participation by the wider membership in enhancing the Council's effectiveness. The Security Council's interaction with other actors has strengthened in some respects — for example, with regional organizations, notably the African Union Peace and Security Council, and with the European Union — and more invitations are extended to civil society briefers. The time is right for the Council to expand and deepen its external interactions for three reasons.

First, the Security Council acts on behalf of the entire United Nations membership. Therefore, the Council should consistently hear from those members, as well as from organizations and citizens, among others.

Secondly, the nature of security threats is shifting. If members prefer to take a comparatively narrow view of the Council's role in addressing new forms of threat, the Council might then consider entering into an active dialogue with those bodies it believes hold responsibility for preventing and responding to modern-day threats to security and the underlying causes of conflict.

Thirdly, the Council has the capacity for such interaction like never before. The Council is known to be dynamic and creative as the master of its own working methods. Now, the global pandemic has forced new tools on all of us. This is an opportunity to not return to business as usual. The best of the pandemic-inspired tools can be retained and developed, allowing the Council more agile and responsive ways to interact with the wider world.

Consistent engagement with the wider membership could easily start with the General Assembly and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council. Member States have made clear their wish for a meaningful discourse: in last year's open debate on working methods, Argentina called for a fluid dialogue between the Council and the General Assembly (see S/PV.8539). The monthly wrap-up sessions at the end of nearly every Council presidency are one forum for a more fluid dialogue, particularly if they are interactive and devote time to hearing the feedback of non-Council members and are included in the Council's monthly programme of work and the *Journal of the United Nations*, as called for in a presidential note of last December (S/2019/994).

The Council has at times hesitated to take up certain forms of global threat, for instance climate threats, cyberthreats, pandemic threats or root causes of conflict that lie in structural inequality and other chronic human rights violations. There is no shadow Security Council set up to address those systemic threats to our shared security. If the Council does not lead on those issues, then who will? The Council does not want to encroach on the mandates of other bodies. That being so, it could

be timely to strengthen the exchanges between the Council and those other bodies, as an expression of the Council's own role and as a support to those bodies' taking up those global threats.

Article 65 of the Charter, providing for the Economic and Social Council to furnish information to the Security Council and to assist the Council if requested, has potential to bring some root causes of conflict more strongly to the fore. The Peacebuilding Commission has also emerged as a platform for discussions on prevention, on transitions from peace operations, on region-wide developments and on current risks and challenges for sustaining peace, also in countries not on the Council's agenda.

Whether with the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly, the Peacebuilding Commission or others, Council members can be encouraged to develop ways to work coherently and burden-share with those entities to address threats to peace and security.

Last year, the then Permanent Representative of France, Ambassador François Delattre, memorably regretted the relatively fleeting attention the Council is able to give to the mandating of peace operations, a phenomenon he described as "adopt and forget". The Council has actively sought to strengthen its interaction with the field, including the visiting missions that became an effective Council tool in the early 1990s. Five such missions a year are typical.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has halted field trips. Last year, speaking in the debate on this item, several former members called for the Council to ensure that "we are not just speaking about countries concerned but also speaking to them" (*S/PV.8539, p. 18*). Technology makes this more possible, more of the time. The Council has long had Special Representatives brief via video-teleconference. There is potential for a more dynamic engagement with the field than a representative beamed in from a room bare but for the United Nations flag. Virtual meetings with Heads of Government, parliamentarians, ministers, a range of civil society representatives; with the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes on the ground; visits to hard-to-reach field locations — all are potentially available, freed from the severe constraints of time, security and logistics that are part and parcel of most Council field visits.

By the same token, technology can open up possibilities for more regular engagement with troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and police-contributing countries (PCCs). Virtual discussions with the field and with TCCs and PCCs can also be held at various points of the mandate cycle, actively mitigating the risks of adopt-and-forget.

With the United Nations turning 75, we may forget what a radical and determined act its establishment represented and still represents, and the extraordinary powers that Member States have conferred on the Security Council. When the Council is at risk of an impasse, proactive members can at times find ways forward — for example, when nine elected members called on the Secretary-General to brief on COVID-19. That briefing was over five weeks ago now. A sustained and regular interaction between the Council and the Secretary-General on COVID-19 would convey to the wider membership the Council's resolve to remain engaged on the progress of the global ceasefire initiative and on the many security threats that this pandemic can unleash and for the mitigation of which, as the Secretary-General said, the Council's engagement will be critical.

Annex 3

Statement by the Arnold A. Saltzman Professor of Professional Practice in International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, Edward Luck

I thank you, Mr. President. It is an honour to join this important conversation at this critical juncture.

The coronavirus disease (Covid-19) has altered how the Council functions in ways unimaginable a few months ago. Yet it has not changed the centrality of the Council's mandate or the importance of getting its working methods right. Therefore, it might be best for me to share some perspectives on the evolution of efforts to enhance the working methods of the Council over time in the hope of offering a sense of where we have been and where we are going.

For more than a quarter of a century, the Council has been engaged in self-reflection concerning how it goes about the world's pre-eminent business of maintaining international peace and security. Unfortunately, this has not always led to better performance on the ground, where its track record remains decidedly mixed. But it has bolstered the Council's transparency and efficiency, while giving it a reputation as the most agile and adaptable intergovernmental organ in the United Nations system.

Reform, as I have said too often over the years, is a process, not an event. For the Council, that process has taken the form of a layered and extended conversation. At its core, this has been, and should be, a dialogue among the 15 members of the Council. The founders wisely made the Council, like the General Assembly, sovereign over its working methods and subsidiary machinery. Since the early 1990s, the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions has been in the vanguard of the reform movement. We owe much to its leadership.

Many observers have been tempted to pose this as a struggle between permanent and non-permanent members, between the haves and have-nots, some gaining and some losing perquisites. There is something to this, of course, but surface appearances are too simplistic.

If one surveys the past quarter-century, what is most remarkable is how much common ground the 15 have found on matters that once seemed stubbornly divisive. Given the inherent power imbalances within the Council, how could this be? Either the ten have more influence than is commonly assumed, or the five are more flexible than they sometimes seem. At best, perhaps there is a common recognition that in the end they all gain from a Council that functions more smoothly and performs more effectively. Besides, none of the agreed measures have come close to challenging the Charter-given advantages of permanency and veto power. These built-in inequalities are not going anywhere.

So how does the rest of the membership — the other 92 per cent of the Member States — gain a voice in this conversation? This annual debate is one such avenue. It is an opportunity for all Member States both to comment on what has or has not been accomplished and to suggest areas where further enhancements are needed. It is a forum for advising, not deciding. It will succeed to the extent that the 15 are listening. If the past is a guide, it is likely that the members of the Council will show some readiness to entertain fresh ideas and to take into account the assessments of others.

I base that judgment, in part, on my experience working with the annual Finnish "Hitting the Ground Running" workshop since its inception 18 years ago.

There, the 15 current members meet with the 5 incoming ones to talk candidly about improving working methods, among other things. The conversation is always lively, often contentious and uniformly productive. It is, again, a process of passing the torch more than an event.

That brings me to unfinished business. The agreement on eight notes in December was an impressive accomplishment for which Kuwait, as outgoing Chair of the Informal Working Group, deserves much credit. Yet the ultimate test will be how fully and faithfully those measures are implemented. As we have seen with different elements of the 507 process, putting agreed words into practice has not always been easy or quick. Some of the phrasing sounds ambiguous, imprecise or open to interpretation — in other words, diplomatic. The first responsibility for monitoring the results lies with the members of the Council, but external observers should not take their eye off the ball in this consolidation phase.

There is still no consensus on pen holding. This issue is as important as it is contentious. At the Finnish workshops, one often hears encouraging words on this front, but then the subsequent negotiations stall. Why? Can we do better next time?

Likewise, many members, over many years, have complained about the lack of informality and interactivity in consultations. Yet little changes. Is this too tough a problem to solve? Are there any new approaches out there?

The midst of a pandemic may not be an ideal time to make predictions, but it is probably safe to say that current conditions do not appear particularly propitious for quick or sweeping agreements in the immediate future. It took many months of tough negotiations to arrive at the December Notes. Yet, under Ambassador King's leadership, the momentum continues. I have no doubt that the search for better working methods is here to stay. Thank you.

Annex 4

Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun

I wish to start by thanking Ambassador King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, for her capable leadership of the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. I also wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassador Mansour Alotaibi, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations and former Chair of the Informal Working Group, for his great contribution in the past two years. I also thank Ms. Landgren and Mr. Luck for their thought-provoking briefings.

The Security Council bears the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The international community expects the Council to play its due role and appropriately address prominent issues concerning international peace and security. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has brought unprecedented challenges to the functioning of the Council. Improving the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the Council's work is what Member States strongly expect. It is also necessary for tackling extraordinary situations like the pandemic.

China attaches great importance to the role of the Security Council. China advocates fairness, transparency, efficiency and pragmatism in the Council's work so that it could effectively fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations. I wish to share the following views on the work of the Council.

First, we should strengthen unity and mutual trust and engage in constructive cooperation. This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. More than ever, we need multilateralism, a strong United Nations, a robust Security Council, and solidarity and cooperation among Member States. Council members should take the lead in upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter, the international system, with the United Nations at its core, and the international order underpinned by international law.

Strengthening communication and cooperation among Council members is the basis for the Council to promote the political settlement of hotspot issues. It is fundamental to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's work. China calls on all Council members to take a responsible and constructive attitude, commit to consultation on an equal footing, increase mutual trust, dispel misgivings, seek common ground and resolve differences. On major issues concerning international peace and security, Council members should build broad consensuses, accommodate the concerns of all parties, prevent politicization and ensure that the Council plays a crucial role at critical moments.

Secondly, we should focus on the responsibilities of the Council to address prominent and pressing issues that threaten international peace and security. The world today faces many problems that are related to peace and security in one way or another. The Council should be focused on its priorities, results-oriented, keep to the right direction and not become a grocery store that tries to offer everything.

The Council should concentrate on regional and international hotspot issues, promote the political settlement of disputes and continue to keep Africa as its priority. We must be committed to addressing the root causes of conflict together with other bodies, ensuring development through peace and promoting peace through development.

With regard to thematic issues that go beyond its mandate, the Council should work in close coordination with other United Nations bodies, such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. At present, it is imperative to conduct

international cooperation against COVID-19, support the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire and immediately lift unilateral sanctions. Bearing in mind the expectation of the international community, the Council should adopt a responsible and constructive approach, prevent politicization and take actions in addressing the negative impact on maintaining the international peace and security.

Thirdly, we should adhere to impartiality and transparency, and enhance communication and coordination with relevant parties and bodies. The Security Council belongs to all Member States and discharges its mandate on their behalf. We should heed the views and recommendations of Member States, especially the countries concerned, and increase their engagement. We should strengthen coordination and communication with other United Nations bodies, in particular the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and other specialized agencies so as to create synergy in our cooperation. We should work closely with the Secretariat, counting on its professional support and meanwhile providing necessary political guidance.

The President of the Security Council plays a leading role in that regard. During its Council presidency in March, China reached out to the countries concerned and regional organizations for their views before the Council meetings on relevant issues. China maintained close coordination with the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Secretary-General. Such practices proved conducive to the Council's work, and would be helpful if continued. We encourage the presidencies for different months to better coordinate with each other so as to enhance integrity and synergy and avoid duplication.

Fourthly, we should strengthen capacity-building to be better prepared in handling emergencies. The Council's work is crucial to the peace and security of the world. All actions of the Council must be based on rules and have a solid legal basis. Meanwhile, China supports the Council in improving itself on the basis of observing the United Nations Charter and its provisional rules of procedure so as to better address the new circumstances and challenges in discharging its mandate.

COVID-19 is posing a formidable challenge to the work of the Council. The good thing is the Council keeps working and never stops. In March, with the joint efforts of all Council members, including China, we devised new working modalities for emergencies. For the first time, the Council held video-teleconferences and adopted resolutions through written procedures. These practices have enriched the Council's working methods and improved its working mechanism, enabling it to deliver tangible results at a difficult time. We need to further explore ways to strengthen the capacity-building of the Council and increase its preparedness for emergencies in the future. Further efforts should be made to provide stable technical support and sufficient conference service.

The world looks to the Security Council whenever international peace and security comes under threat. This is pressure indeed, but it is also a driving force. China will work with other Council members to build on the good practices and improve the Council's working methods. Together, we can ensure the Council's ability to safeguard peace and security for the world with concrete actions.

Annex 5

Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière

I want first to thank Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for chairing the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions and for organizing, together with Estonia, this eleventh open debate. I also want to thank my old friends Karin Landgren and Edward Luck for their presentations.

This is always a good opportunity to reflect among us and with the other members of the United Nations on our methods and our performance. As we distance ourselves from our daily work, thanks to the eagle eye of our great briefers, we can better see not only our flaws but also our strengths.

I will focus my intervention on the theme of the debate: transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. But before I start, I want to commend Kuwait for the adoption of eight notes by the President (S/2019/990, S/2019/991, S/2019/992, S/2019/993, S/2019/994, S/2019/995, S/2019/996, S/2019/997) to adapt our methods of work. France will continue to engage with members of the Council to improve our methods towards more effectiveness, inclusiveness and transparency.

I also want to acknowledge our collective flexibility to adjust quickly to the constraints posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic — the so-called need for agility pointed out in the concept note (S/2020/374, annex). As we moved to video-teleconference meetings, we have maintained the transparency, as far as technically possible, and the ability for the Council to take decisions. Unfortunately, the only victim in this process is multilingualism. The language regime of the United Nations was established to enable the proper functioning of its deliberative bodies. The legitimacy and efficiency of the United Nations depend on respect for that core value. We are confident that the Secretariat will provide us with simultaneous interpretation in the six official languages as a matter of priority, eight weeks after the beginning of the COVID-19 restrictions. In any case, as French is also a working language of the United Nations, I intend to conduct the presidency of the Security Council in French next month.

As an observer and participant in the work of the Security Council over the past 15 years, I recognize that its work is more transparent and open than ever. Almost all the reports of the Secretary-General to the Council are made public. We now spend more time in open meetings than in closed ones. At these open meetings we hear from interested parties, other Members of the United Nations, troop-contributing countries, all relevant United Nations entities and civil society, in particular women and youth. These open discussions certainly help to better inform our decisions. Transparency and openness to other actors and Members must therefore be maintained.

Nevertheless, the function of the Security Council is not only to be a forum where different points of views on a specific situation are presented. The Council is an executive body. Its specificity lies in its authority to consider any dispute or situation so as to determine whether they are likely to endanger international peace and security, take a political position or action on a specific situation and adopt binding decisions and mandates that the Secretary-General and his representatives are called on to implement in order to restore or maintain international peace and security. It is a decision-making body that is expected to act to stop wars and mass atrocities. To be effective, it must be driven by a spirit of cooperation and compromise.

However, if the Security Council is to be efficient and effective in its executive role, more private discussions are needed. All diplomats know that to reach consensus

on difficult issues, direct exchanges behind closed doors are often more conducive to an agreement. Similarly, closed conversations between Council members and the Secretariat on the implementation of Council mandates are more productive than public statements of national positions.

Over the past few years, since 2017 to be exact, the Council has held many of its meetings in an open format. From a balance between open and closed meetings, we now spend more than twice as much time in open meetings as in closed ones. But as we have become more open, we have also adopted fewer resolutions and press statements. The total number of texts adopted, without counting condemnations of terrorist attacks, went from around 160 a year in 2016 to 110 in 2019. That is a significant decrease.

The number of texts is not the only measure of the Council's performance. There are also political reasons for the difficulty in reaching a position in the Council. But, as we consider transparency, efficiency and effectiveness, we should bear in mind that our practice of holding more public meetings may also undermine the efficiency and the effectiveness of the Council.

The time spent in public meetings stating national positions is time that we cannot use to discuss with the Secretariat about its performance, or to engage with one another on a text. We should be aware that a united Council position will always have more influence on political actors in conflict situations than 15, sometimes contradicting, national positions in a public meeting. We should also make more use of private informal formats such as informal interactive dialogues, or informal Arria Formula meetings, or private formal meetings in order to engage directly and constructively with the countries and parties concerned, as we do when we are on a field visit.

But if the Council is to be effective, it is important to reaffirm the need for a spirit of compromise. As I have said, the recurrent use of the veto threat cannot be a way of negotiating. I truly hope that we collectively find a better balance between the time spent in public discussions and in closed consultations, and that we focus more of our attention and energy on the effectiveness of the Council in a spirit of compromise in order to reach solutions that benefit the lives of those in conflict situations.

Annex 6

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia

I thank Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Ms. Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report; and Mr. Edward Luck for their briefings.

Russia extends its appreciation to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for chairing the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions.

We thank the Estonian presidency for organizing this open video-teleconference on the working methods of the Security Council. We need to keep issues related to the functioning and effectiveness of the Security Council on the agenda.

The pandemic has given an unexpected boost to the topic that we discuss today. I would like to thank our colleagues from China and the Dominican Republic for their very professional and effective stewardship in their capacity as President in March and April, respectively. Now our Estonian colleagues are also on the right track. Despite somewhat protracted discussions on the provisional working methods in these extraordinary circumstances, the Council was eventually able to agree on the modalities. We see that today the Council is operating rather well in the circumstances in which we find ourselves. We welcome that and call for keeping to this agreed modus operandi.

Today we have all the tools to allow us to work nearly as intensely as — or even more intensely than — we used to. We have everything, including the records; the only difference is in the name, but there are legal reasons for that, which cannot be ignored.

I heard today that we need to devise contingency plans. I think we have already done so, and today we are operating under those plans. But we need further contingency plans relating to our operation and functioning in the post-lockdown environment. That time will inevitably come. We have to start preparing for it now.

We have always stressed that the issue of the working methods in the Council is a delicate one. We are pleased that the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions adopted a number of important provisions to improve the work of the Security Council at the end of 2019.

Russia has always consistently supported the Council's efforts to improve its working methods. We share the aim of making the work of the Council more democratic and transparent. To give an example, at the beginning of this week we strongly advocated for an open video-teleconference with the participation of Director-General F. Arias of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, since many of questions we planned to ask him are definitely of interest to the public. Syria, as an interested party, also advocated for that. It is a pity that our initiative was not supported by those colleagues who champion support for transparency on other occasions. Having said that, we fully support those who advocate that a balance between efficiency and transparency should be found. We truly believe that the Council can and should do more for the sake of improving the effectiveness of its work.

We welcome the progress made in recent years, and thank our Japanese and Kuwaiti colleagues for their painstaking efforts in 2017 and 2019, respectively. As a result, we have a renewed note S/2017/507, and stress that its provisions are yet to be implemented in full.

I would like to specifically stress the issue of penholdership. As we are all aware, note 507 reiterates that any member of the Security Council may be a penholder and that more than one member may act as co-penholder. However, the reality is that three permanent members remain today sole penholders on most of the country-specific dossiers on the Council's agenda.

We would like to use this opportunity to draw the Council's attention in this regard to our draft presidential note on penholdership. We are ready to actively and constructively engage with all Council members in order to adopt it. There is no doubt that this would be a step in the right direction, helping enhance the effectiveness of the Council's work and ensure that the drafting of Council documents is conducted in an inclusive manner enabling the full participation of all members of the Council. And the products themselves will be better from the outset and easier to edit and agree on.

We consistently raise the issue of humanitarian delistings and exemptions. There is a lot to analyse and enhance here.

More food for thought is the idea of extending the Ombudsperson institution across all sanctions committees. We believe that it would be a significant step forward in improving the fairness and transparency of the sanctions regimes and enhance the rule of law in the implementation of the Council's decisions.

We are confident that the Council should stick to its priorities, focusing on major issues of great urgency that represent threats to international peace and security. We appeal once again for the Council's agenda not to be overloaded and abused with the consideration of thematic subjects on the agenda of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council or other United Nations bodies.

Efforts to improve the Security Council's working methods can bring about practical results only when Council members reject politicized approaches and coordinate their initiatives on the basis of mutual respect for each other's concerns and priorities.

With regard to the subject of today's discussion, we would like to highlight the issue of the submission of the report of the Council to the General Assembly. As we all understand, that document remains a sort of outreach to the broader United Nations membership in the General Assembly. We are satisfied with the progress in the preparation of the report for the year 2019. It proves the ability of the Council to operate in a constructive manner with the aim of reaching consensus. It is our hope that this time the Council will be able to respect the deadline it set itself for adopting the report no later than 30 May, even though we all agreed such a deadline would take effect starting from the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly.

Annex 7

Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, James Roscoe

I thank all those who briefed us this morning. I would also like to thank Estonia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for arranging this meeting and for preparing the concept note (S/2020/374, annex) to inform our discussion.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has presented an unprecedented challenge to the Security Council over the past two months. Most importantly, the spread of this disease has significant implications for international peace and security that the Council needs to address. But it has also presented major challenges for the Council's working methods. In my intervention today, I will consider how the Council has adapted to these challenges before moving to some more general points.

First, I would like to pay tribute to the efforts of China, the Dominican Republic and Estonia. Under their respective presidencies in March, April and May, the Council has been able to move to a position where open Council video-teleconferences can now be broadcast live on United Nations Television and we are able to adopt resolutions and presidential statements through a written procedure. We should not underestimate the work that was required to achieve this outcome, including from the Secretariat. The move to broadcasting Council video-teleconferences in full was a particularly important step for the transparency of the Council's work.

However, the United Kingdom regrets that Council working methods have not been able to respond in a more agile and effective way to this crisis. I recall in this context Article 28 of the Charter of the United Nations, which requires the Council to be organized in a way that enables it to function continuously. Due to a lack of consensus in the Council, neither the Council nor its subsidiary bodies have held a formal meeting since 12 March. There are therefore no verbatim transcripts of our meetings. Our technical platform has not been able to accommodate simultaneous interpretation or open debates and continues to suffer from technical glitches. Meetings are conducted without the benefit of the established framework of the provisional rules of procedure and the mechanisms for resolution of disagreements that they provide.

We all hope that we will be able to return to the Chamber soon. But as long as we are confronted with these extraordinary circumstances, we need to continue to pursue opportunities for improving our working methods. When we do return to normal, we will need to consider how we can put contingency plans in place to ensure that we are able to respond more quickly and effectively to any future crises. Last week's Arria Formula meeting on the anniversary of Victory in Europe Day showed us what can be done.

I would like to turn to the potential tension between transparency and effectiveness highlighted in the concept note. One significant challenge in this regard is maintaining an appropriate balance between open and closed meetings. Achieving the right balance requires Council members to approach the monthly programme of work with an open mind. It is easy to fall into the trap of following the same format each time an issue appears on our agenda.

One option that I would like to highlight is the private meeting. The opportunity for Member States to participate provides an element of transparency, but the closed nature of the meeting removes the temptation to address the media rather than Council colleagues. But the assumption that closed meetings are more effective does not always hold true. To be effective, Council members need to enter these meetings

with a willingness to engage in a discussion and consider action. Regrettably, we still see too many examples of Council members reading out prepared statements or refusing to engage in a serious discussion of outcomes or next steps.

My final point on transparency relates to civil society. The United Kingdom believes that engaging with a diverse set of briefers is an important element of transparency, and we will continue to promote civil society participation in Council activity. But as highlighted in the Arria Formula meeting organized by the United Kingdom and the Dominican Republic in February, the Council needs to do better at handling the risk of reprisals. We look forward to continuing discussions with Council colleagues on this important issue.

Turning to efficiency, there has been some progress in bearing down on speaking times in the Council. But the Council still spends too much time in lengthy meetings that address the conflicts of yesterday rather than shouldering its responsibilities to address today's conflicts and prevent future conflict. We support informal horizon-scanning briefings by the Secretariat and the development of sofa talks to address this challenge. It is important that we use these opportunities effectively.

But informal discussions are no substitute for Council meetings — not least for reasons of transparency. We must therefore continue to subject the Council's programme of work to critical analysis and be prepared to bring new issues to the Council. The current crisis means that the Council's work on prevention is more important than ever.

The United Kingdom has also prioritized reducing the length and opacity of Council products over recent years. We have had some success, especially with reducing the length of peacekeeping mandates. But there is more work to be done. The United Kingdom will maintain our focus on this issue.

In conclusion, the Council's working methods have perhaps never been under greater scrutiny. While we have made significant progress since March, our ambition should be for the Council to be a leader in innovation and agility. I look forward to continuing discussions on how we can rise to the challenge.

Annex 8**Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Cherith Norman Chalet**

I would like to thank you, Sir, and, through you, Estonia, for convening this important discussion. I also thank Rhonda, Karin and Ed for their briefings and remarks.

The Security Council has demonstrated its resilience and flexibility in adapting its working methods during the coronavirus disease pandemic. It has been impressive to see us continue to conduct the Council's important and life-saving work during such a difficult time, and it is a testament to the commitment and professionalism of every delegation around this virtual table.

The Security Council has admirably established a procedure for the adoption of resolutions through a written process, ensuring the extension of peacekeeping missions and sanctions resolutions and enabling the continuity of our important work to maintain international peace and security.

The Council has also held numerous virtual videoconferences, including many, like this one, which have been streamed live, allowing all Member States and the world to see the Council at work, debating the pressing issues of the day. This transparency is important in the Council's work.

We thank the delegation of Kuwait for its effective chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions during the previous two years, and we congratulate them on the successful conclusion of several notes.

We enthusiastically participated in the fruitful retreat in January, hosted by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and welcome their leadership on this matter. We agree that implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507) and the recently adopted notes should be the primary focus of the Working Group at the present time. We also agree that it is important to find the right balance between transparency and effectiveness and efficiency.

We consider it important that the Council maintain sufficient flexibility to respond to changing circumstances throughout our work, and we look forward to engaging on working methods within the Working Group under the leadership of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines over the coming year.

Annex 9**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the current 10 elected members (E-10) of the Security Council: Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia and Viet Nam.

At the outset, we would like to express our appreciation to the Estonian presidency for convening this timely and important open video-teleconference (VTC) on the working methods of the Security Council. We thank Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Chair of the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions; Ms. Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report; and Professor Edward C. Luck, Arnold A. Saltzman Professor of Professional Practice in International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, for their insightful briefings.

Reviewing and improving the working methods of the Security Council has always been of great interest to both Council and non-Council members. To that end, a number of ideas have been put forth, and several have been adopted. The E-10 strongly believes that this open VTC is yet another extremely important opportunity to take stock of what we have thus far achieved and, most important, to discuss ways and means by which we can further this process.

Although the wider United Nations membership is able to join today's meeting only through the submission of written statements owing to technicalities during the time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the interest shown by States Members of the United Nations over the past years clearly demonstrates the importance that all Member States attach to the improvement of the Security Council's working methods. This second joint statement by the E-10, which shares this view, is a testament to our continued determination to take concrete steps towards improving the functioning of the Council.

The E-10 is of the view that, in order to do so, we have to address the issues of the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's work, as well as that of its inclusiveness, in a balanced and practical manner, paying due attention to agility when the situation demands it. It is the responsibility of all Council members to ensure that the Council is able to perform its United Nations Charter-mandated duties, including in terms of prevention. This is an increasingly pressing issue, particularly as the Council, along with other international organizations, is faced with mounting challenges to multilateralism and a growing number of global issues, both traditional and non-traditional. The sweeping, unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic not only requires adjustments in the work of the Security Council but also lays bare the need for the Council to be more responsive, effective and agile to ensure continuous functioning, as mandated by the Charter.

Regarding what has been achieved, it is highly encouraging that in recent years the Council has agreed on a number of specific measures with regard to working methods, particularly in implementing the provisional rules of procedure and presidential note S/2017/507. Transparency is high on the agenda. Public meetings have been held on almost all the items on the Council's agenda, especially in the past few months. Council presidencies, including those held by E-10 members, continue to closely engage with the wider United Nations membership, civil-society representatives, the press and other stakeholders through various opportunities, including briefings on the monthly programmes of work and wrap-up sessions.

Equally important, we have seen a significant increase in the number of resolutions, press statements and press elements that are initiated by E-10 members.

The E-10 also shares the view that there is an increasing need for inclusiveness. We have been continuing to promote closer coordination and greater experience-sharing among elected members through various mechanisms in order to better prepare and make full use of their two-year term. The increasing cooperation among the outgoing, current and incoming elected members has one goal: to enable them better to serve on the Council in the pursuit of the maintenance of international peace and security. Monthly meetings, workshops, coordination meetings, bilateral consultations and many other innovative platforms are among the various tools at our disposal. The E-10 has also been trying its best to engage among the 15 members of the Council, with the wider United Nations membership, representatives of States on the agenda of the Council, troop- and police-contributing countries, civil society and others to facilitate broader consultations on the work of the Council and to ensure that the Council has the best possible information on the situation on the ground.

During this unprecedented time of the COVID-19 pandemic, the efficiency, effectiveness and agility of the Council have been maintained. Although it has been impossible to continue normal functioning at United Nations Headquarters, the Council has been able to conduct its business by virtual means, including video-teleconferences. The Council has gradually improved its performance in discharging its mandate with a new set of procedures for meetings and making decisions. In this process, efforts aimed at ensuring transparency also have yielded specific results, including the webcast of the entirety of open VTCs and the introduction of an informal plan of VTCs or an informal programme of work. The E-10 would like to take this opportunity to commend our fellow Council members China, the Dominican Republic and Estonia, as the Presidents in March, April and May, for their leadership during this challenging time.

The achievements made so far are also a testament to the dynamism of Council members. The E-10 welcomes the adoption of eight notes by the President in December 2019 developed within the framework of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions under the chairmanship of the State of Kuwait. They are now an integral part of the Council's proceedings and practices. They are designed to further enhance the engagement of the Council with the wider membership as well as to address pertinent issues such as an earlier integration of newly elected members in the work of the Council and a fair distribution of work for the selection of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies. Taken together, they help codify the various creative practices that successive members of the Council have been undertaking to ensure ever-increasing transparency, efficiency and engagement. We welcome the constructive engagement among all Council members in reaching consensus on these notes.

We also welcome the efforts made by Ambassador Rhonda King of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines since the beginning of the year to further facilitate the work of the Informal Working Group. The informal retreat on working methods hosted by the current Chair and her predecessor in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in January this year was an excellent brainstorming session.

In rising to current and future challenges, much could and must be done by the Council to better fulfil its mandate and serve the aspirations of wider membership. The E-10 reiterates that there should be greater burden-sharing and a more equal distribution of work among all members of the Council in order to improve the Council's effectiveness. There is a need for further implementation of the agreed note on the selection of the Chairs of subsidiary bodies and renewed discussions on the note on co-penholdership.

While being encouraged by the fact that some elected members have assumed penholdership or co-penholdership on a number of issues, we would like to emphasize that this practice should be maintained and further promoted. The Chair of a subsidiary body should also have a reasonable share of the co-penholdership on the respective dossier, should the Chair be in a position to accept that role. Furthermore, such a mechanism might promote greater cooperation and coordination among Council members in relevant matters. Early engagement in the work of the Council is also important for every incoming member, including briefings by the Secretariat conducted earlier in the preparation for membership. We welcome the fact that, based on the recently adopted note by the President, incoming members are now able to receive all communications of the Council for a period of five months before joining the Council, and we urge that, during the observation period, incoming members be able to observe the work of the Council in various settings, including in consultations and negotiations on Council documents.

We underline the importance of accountability and transparency within the work of all subsidiary bodies of the Council, including sanctions committees. We also strongly believe in the need to continue to make United Nations targeted sanctions more effective and legitimate by further pursuing efforts to strengthen fair and clear procedures in sanction regimes of the Council in order to respect international due-process standards. In that regard, the E-10 would like to reiterate its belief that this can be achieved through the creation for other sanctions regimes of appropriate, tailored review mechanisms similar to those of the system involving the Office of the Ombudsperson for the sanctions regime of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015), concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities.

Most fundamentally, it is necessary to ensure the effective implementation of all the notes on working methods as well as to think of further improvements in this regard. As the working methods of the Council are always evolving, deliberations need to continue towards achieving a stronger living set of procedures and practices to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the Council.

In addition, during the current extraordinary period, greater efforts should be made to guarantee the Council's ability to continuously conduct its work, including that of subsidiary bodies, in accordance with normal procedures and practices. It is important to keep the international community well informed of the way in which the Council carries out its day-to-day business. It is up to all of us members of the Security Council to enhance the Council's ability to act by agreeing on central issues.

It would be remiss of us to highlight the aforementioned significant improvements and some of the challenges we continue to face without underlining the critical and urgent need for a reform of the Security Council aimed at reflecting contemporary global realities, including through addressing imbalances and enhancing the representativeness of the Council.

To conclude, the E-10 reiterates its commitment to the shared goals of enhancing the Council's efficiency and effectiveness, bearing in the mind the mandate entrusted to it by the whole membership of the United Nations. We look forward to receiving views and inputs from the wider membership of the United Nations to improve the working methods of the Council so that it can better fulfil its responsibility under Article 24 of the United Nations Charter.

Annex 10

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, Adela Raz

At the outset, I would like to thank the Estonian presidency for having convened today's Security Council open video-teleconference (VTC) meeting on the theme "Ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council". I also want to thank Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions; Ms. Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report; and Mr. Edward Luck, Arnold A. Saltzman Professor at Columbia University, for their insightful briefings. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the Permanent Representative of Kuwait, as the former Chair of the Informal Working Group, for his successful leadership and dedicated efforts in supporting and enhancing the work of the Security Council.

The Charter of the United Nations entrusted the Security Council with the lofty responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. Given the rising polarization and ongoing conflicts around the globe, exacerbated by the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Security Council must enhance its credibility and reassert its authority by strengthening the transparency and effectiveness of its important work to end conflicts and address threats to international peace and security.

We acknowledge the progress made and the latest developments in the implementation of presidential note S/2017/507 by the President of the Security Council in the framework of improving the working methods of the Security Council through the work of the Informal Working Group. However, much remains to be done. To that end, I would like to share the following points.

First, we welcome the Council's progress in making its discussions and decisions available to the wider membership of the United Nations and to the public, including through the webcast of open meetings, the issuance of press elements when closed consultations are held and the timely publication of important Security Council documents on the official website of the Security Council. Nevertheless, there is still a need to further enhance dialogue and interaction with non-Council members to engage in the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies when appropriate. This implies further improving coordination and communication with countries concerned and making sure they are aware of the issues being discussed and the timing of those discussions. Ensuring that concerned countries are properly informed and have an understanding of the proceedings allows those countries to respond and reflect accordingly and provide additional information or perspectives that can help better reflect the realities on the ground.

Secondly, to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the Security Council, there is a need to strengthen follow-up and monitoring mechanisms on the implementation of the Security Council's decisions, recommendations and resolutions.

Thirdly, Afghanistan suggests and fully supports the idea that the Chairs of all subsidiary bodies continue to travel periodically to regions applicable to their work to expand their vision and seek the views of concerned States from the ground. That could also serve to explain and promote the objectives of the subsidiary body's mandate.

Fourthly, the Security Council must look to improve the role and effectiveness of the Council's sanctions regimes. Sanctions are one of the most effective tools that the Council can use to diminish the operational capabilities of terrorist groups and of supporting individuals and organizations. Effective sanctions regimes can also help to isolate reconcilable groups and push them towards the negotiation table. For these to work effectively, their general scope and listing and delisting procedures must also effectively engage the countries concerned in consistent communications with the Council, including in processes such as the extension of the mandate of the monitoring team. In that regard, Afghanistan fully supports and underscores the need for sanctions committees to seek the views of Member States that are particularly affected or concerned by sanctions and to foster early and periodic engagement and dialogue between them and the relevant sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels throughout their mandate.

Improving the working methods of the Security Council is an evolving and ongoing task that cannot be accomplished all at once. It requires continued work on adapting and reviewing the notes of Presidents based on the work of the Informal Working Group. In that respect, we further value the efforts of the members of the Council in quickly adapting the body's working procedures to address the new scenario created by the challenge of the pandemic. The Council and its members have shown their commitment to their important task of sustaining international peace and security, even in the face of an unprecedented situation, and this must be commended.

We are committed to working with the Security Council to build a more effective, transparent and accountable body. We believe that with a continuous improvement in its working methods and ceaseless innovations in its practice, the Security Council will be able to better fulfil the task entrusted to it by the States Members of the United Nations.

Annex 11
Statement by Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations

[Original: Spanish]

Argentina thanks Estonia for convening this open debate on a topic that has always been of particular interest to us. We also thank Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Ms. Karin Landgren, Executive Director of the Security Council Report, for their valuable presentations.

Argentina believes that presidential note S/2017/507 was a valuable tool for increasing the transparency, inclusiveness and efficiency of the Council, and is a balanced text that can serve as a useful guide to agreed measures or best practices regarding its working methods.

In that regard, Argentina would like to congratulate the delegation of Kuwait for its excellent work during its chairmanship of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions and appreciates the adoption of the eight presidential notes, namely, S/2019/990 to S/2019/997, which contribute to greater efficiency and transparency in the Council's work.

Argentina has historically advocated the need for ongoing efforts to increase transparency, inclusiveness, openness, democratization, effectiveness and efficiency in the Council's work. In that regard, we are guided by the conviction that, without affecting the effectiveness of decision-making, the Council can and must be more transparent and democratic in its relationship with the wider membership.

There is no doubt about the improvements in recent years to the working methods of this organ. That has obviously been the result of the efforts of the elected members, who, through their patience and commitment, continue to be the architects of those achievements.

It is worth recalling that the most recent Argentine presidency of the Informal Working Group, a position it held in the 2013-2014 biennium, also saw the adoption of numerous notes by the President on topics including consultations with troop- and police-contributing countries, dialogue with non-Council members and other bodies, the participation of Council members in the drafting of Council instruments and their broader drafting responsibilities, as well as the continuity of the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies.

Argentina appreciates the regular evaluation of the implementation of note 507 and other relevant notes, the identification of successful practices and possible shortcomings, as well as the contemplation of necessary adjustments. In that regard, Argentina calls on the Informal Working Group to continue working towards a single comprehensive document in order to consolidate and streamline all decisions on working methods.

The culture of the Security Council as it relates to decision-making and its effectiveness hinges on our ability to improve its working methods. We know that a more effective and efficient Council can be achieved only through an election-based system in which accountability is ensured and in which there can be no selective action in response to international crises.

The use of the veto, or even its threat of use, has been extremely harmful to the work of the Organization. Argentina is convinced that the veto limits the Council's action, and therefore favours its abolition. As long as that is not possible, Argentina

subscribes to its regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, as well as the French-Mexican initiative.

The use of the veto or its threat of use has a considerable impact on the agility of the Council's work — both in normal times and in these extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances — which we are called to reflect upon in this debate.

The Security Council's delay or inaction does not deprive the General Assembly of its rights under the Charter of the United Nations, nor does it relieve it of its responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

In that regard, we recall the validity of resolution 377 (V), better known as "Uniting for peace", adopted in November 1950, pursuant to which if the General Assembly may take action if the Council fails to do so due to the negative vote of a permanent member in any case where there appears to be a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression. In such cases, the Assembly may immediately consider the matter with a view to recommending collective action to the United Nations membership in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.

In that regard, Argentina supports greater coordination and communication among the various organs of the Organization in order to join efforts to achieve common objectives, in accordance with the Charter.

There is no doubt that the United Nations, and multilateralism in general, is facing one of the worst crises since 1945. The Council has not yet taken a stand, but it is never too late for it to show unity in the face of such a crisis, which affects all Member States.

Argentina is convinced that the Security Council must be more accountable and respect the authority of the General Assembly — the Organization's most representative, democratic and transparent organ.

We commend the work of the Dominican Republic during its Council presidency in April. It has enabled greater transparency and openness in the Council's work in these unprecedented circumstances. We trust that Estonia, having been given the opportunity to lead the Council as an elected member, will also serve the interests of the entire international community.

Annex 12

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations

Australia welcomes the timely holding of this open debate by Estonia, in its capacity as President of the Security Council, and commends its approach to the Council's working methods. Australia would also like to commend Kuwait on the work it undertook in its capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions. That work enabled the Group to secure the adoption, in late December 2019, of eight notes by the Council President on issues that enhance the Council's working methods and constructively build on note presidential note S/2017/507.

Australia recognizes the need for the Council to be efficient and flexible in responding to crises, but transparency is crucial to ensure confidence and, therefore, effectiveness. The Security Council can appear opaque to those who cannot participate in meetings and determine outcomes, including the wider membership and various stakeholders in the machinery of the United Nations and civil society groups. Greater visibility of Council deliberations would assist those groups in targeting inputs appropriately. Australia firmly believes that this will improve decision-making and perhaps even implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Australia also supports greater use of public meetings, open debates, Arria Formula meetings, monthly wrap-up sessions and timely reporting to the General Assembly as a mean to enhancing transparency. At a time when members are looking for ways to retain public confidence in the multilateral system, those reforms should be considered as a priority.

To achieve its core function of maintaining international peace and security, Australia encourages the Council to use all the tools at its disposal to enhance its ability to prevent and not just respond to conflict, in line with the sustaining peace agenda. The Security Council should request more horizon-scanning and situational awareness briefings, including with input from the Peacebuilding Commission, which should be viewed as a key partner. The Council should work to ensure that diverse voices are heard from people in countries on its agenda, especially women and civil society representatives.

Crises demand agility — the capacity to adapt and respond to extraordinary circumstances. We recognize the Council's continued efforts to improve its working methods while the coronavirus disease restrictions are in place. However, we recommend that the open and closed video-teleconferences be considered formal meetings and recorded by the Secretariat. That would increase transparency in the longer-term. Further, allowing non-Council members to speak in open discussions, as they are able to do during in-person meetings, would ensure that the Council continues to benefit from a diversity of views.

In conclusion, we must all remember that these discussions and the ensuing reforms are, above all, aimed at improving the Council's effectiveness, to which we are all deeply committed. During this challenging time in New York and around the world, Australia stands ready to contribute to discussion and action, as appropriate.

Annex 13

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations, Jan Kickert

First, let me thank Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, as well as Ms. Karin Landgren, Executive Director of the Security Council Report, for their briefings.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has presented the whole United Nations system, including the Security Council, with unprecedented challenges related to business continuity. Austria, as part of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, has been following with great interest the Council's efforts to adapt its working methods.

I recognize that substantial progress has been made in helping the Council discharge its duties under the Charter of the United Nations. The Council has found a way to organize virtual meetings, adopt resolutions and other Council instruments and to agree on press elements after closed video-teleconference meetings (VTCs). I commend the monthly presidencies of China, the Dominican Republic and Estonia on circulating letters in order to keep the wider United Nations membership informed on the Council's working methods.

Nevertheless, Austria has identified several gaps affecting the transparency and efficiency of the Council's work. Both open and closed VTCs are still considered informal Council meetings. Austria is concerned about the potential long-term consequences of the lack of official records of Council meetings during this period. Due to the informal nature of the meetings, open and closed VTCs cannot be announced in *The Journal of the United Nations*, thus adding to the lack of transparency vis-à-vis the wider United Nations membership and the general public.

Interpretation of said Council meetings into all official United Nations languages is still unavailable. Moreover, voting on draft resolutions is taking place through a lengthy written procedure instead of in an open VTC, thus adversely impacting both transparency and efficiency. Finally, the participation of the wider United Nations membership in open VTCs of the Council, in accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, is possible only in written form, thus compounding the lack of interaction between the Council members and the wider United Nations membership.

It is apparent that a lack of progress on those issues cannot be due to technical difficulties alone. Sometimes, it is the lack of political will that is the biggest challenge. Austria strongly encourages future Council Presidents to address those outstanding issues.

Even though we are still in the midst of the current crisis, I believe it is not too early to draw some conclusions for the future.

First, it has become clear that the Council, like all other organs of the United Nations system, needs to be quicker and more agile in responding to future crises.

Secondly, the whole United Nations membership, together with the United Nations Secretariat, needs to have a frank discussion, including in the Fifth Committee, about modernizing the information technology systems necessary for ensuring business continuity.

Thirdly, once the COVID-19 crisis has passed and physical meetings have resumed, the Council should incorporate the positive aspects of its virtual work. It should continue extending invitations for virtual participation — both to high-level

representatives from capitals and to civil society briefers who cannot travel to New York. That would both raise the profile of Council meetings and make its debates more inclusive. An excellent example of how that can work in practice is the recent Arria Formula meeting on “75 Years from the End of the Second World War on European Soil”, organized on 8 May under the Estonian presidency.

Notwithstanding the current crisis and its impact on the Council’s working methods, I would be remiss if I did not point towards unfinished business when it comes to the implementation of presidential note S/2017/507, as well as notes S/2019/990 to S/2019/997. Now is not the time for complacency.

I do not believe that the current dynamics, which pit the five permanent members (P-5) against each other, the P-5 against the 10 elected members of the Security Council and the Council members against the wider United Nations membership are in any way useful or constructive. Our common goal should be a Council that delivers on its mandate. Austria will continue to measure the success and failure of the Council not by its substantive outcomes alone, but also by how well it can adapt its working methods to become more transparent, inclusive and accountable.

Annex 14**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, Yashar Aliyev**

At the outset, I would like to commend the delegation of Estonia, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of May, and the delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, for holding this meeting and for submitting a concept note (S/2020/374, annex) on the topic. We also thank the briefers for their presentations.

The working methods of the Security Council, on which the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security is conferred, continue to attract heightened attention and interest among the broader membership of the United Nations. The emergence of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has triggered the need for taking additional urgent measures aimed at safeguarding the effectiveness of the Security Council under unprecedented and extraordinary circumstances.

We acknowledge the role being played by the Informal Working Group to advance ways to enhance the transparency, accountability and overall efficiency of the Council's work, and we welcome the progress achieved in improving its working methods. I would also like to praise the work done so far by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as the current Chair of the Informal Working Group, as well as the efforts and contributions made by the former Chairs.

Taking into account the questions proposed for consideration at this meeting, I would like to focus briefly on the following three points.

First, it is clear that unity among the permanent members is absolutely necessary for agreements to be reached. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that both permanent and elected members of the Security Council collectively bear responsibility for international peace and security. We note the general recognition among Council members that transparency and efficiency can be jointly secured, and we would welcome further deliberations and contributions to make the Council a more collaborative and inclusive organ.

Secondly, the broader United Nations membership should be given more opportunities to be heard and informed in a full and timely manner. We take positive note of some developments in that respect and would like to particularly commend some elected members for their efforts aimed at ensuring the Security Council's transparency and greater openness in its interaction with the wider membership, especially at present, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thirdly, the Security Council's effectiveness and accountable functioning necessitate, first and foremost, the implementation of Council decisions. Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations is clear about the obligations of Member States to that effect. The fact that the unlawful use of force against sovereign States with resultant territorial acquisitions continues, Security Council resolutions notwithstanding, does not mean that such a state of affairs is a constitutive part of the Council's working methods. The objective of maintaining international peace and security is hardly attainable if universally recognized fundamental values, norms and principles are overtly disregarded, misinterpreted or made conditional by aggressors who seek to whitewash their illegal actions.

The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations are fundamental building blocks in the shared rules-based international order. They are universally binding and apply to all crises and conflicts whatever their distinct

root causes or nature. The powers and responsibilities of the main organs of the United Nations and the decisions adopted therein cannot be substituted, conditioned or limited by regional and subregional organizations or their conflict-settlement or mediation formats and mechanisms. Protracted conflicts and their political, military and humanitarian consequences, including prolonged foreign occupation, ethnic cleansing and the lack of accountability for atrocity crimes, cannot be overlooked.

The implementation of resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, must be among the top priorities of the United Nations. The primary objective of the ongoing peace process, whose mandate is based on those resolutions, is to ensure the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, the restoration of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders, and the return of the forcibly displaced persons to their homes and properties. The achievement of those objectives is mandatory and non-negotiable, as the use of force, together with its resultant military occupation and ethnic cleansing of the Azerbaijani territories, is incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations and international law and will never bring peace, reconciliation and stability.

In the year of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the shared purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the Organization remain as important as ever. Strict compliance with these purposes and principles and the fulfilment in good faith of the obligations assumed by States under the Charter are of the greatest importance for the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of sustained economic growth, sustainable development, human rights, justice and international law.

Annex 15**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations, Jamal Fares Alrowaiei**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I would like to thank the delegation of the Republic of Estonia, President of the Security Council for the month of May, and the delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, for convening this important meeting. I also extend to the delegation of Estonia my sincerest wishes for success in its presidency of the Council under the current circumstances, against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Lastly, I wish to thank Her Excellency Ms. Inga Rhonda King, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and Ms. Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report.

The Security Council has the crucial responsibility to maintain international peace and security, hence the need to develop and improve the Council's working methods. We welcome the regular holding of open debates on the working methods of the Council, as continued discussion of this issue is of interest to all Member States, which wish to see the Council operate in the best possible way and adapt its working methods in response to ongoing changes. These debates also provide an opportunity to review progress made, as well as to identify developments and hear a wide range of insights and opinions on how to address them. In this regard, we must commend the efforts of the previous Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Thanks to their efforts, many important documents on the Council's working methods have been issued, chief among them the revised note S/2017/507, with the objective of enhancing the Council's efficiency and transparency and finding ways for the Council to address issues of concern. We would also like to express appreciation for the contribution made by the State of Kuwait during its presidency of the Informal Working Group.

Despite developments that have helped to increase transparency in the Council, there is room to make further improvements that can strengthen the Council's ability to perform its mandated functions under the Charter of the United Nations.

In that context, we wish to underscore the need for consultations to be more objective and interactive; for States that are not members of the Council to be more involved in its work, as appropriate, in line with Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter; for the report of the Security Council to be issued in a timely manner, so as to enable the General Assembly to debate it; for more open debates to be convened; and for Council documents in the six official languages to be made available promptly on the website. We reiterate the substance of document S/2016/619, which covers the work of the chairs of the subsidiary organs and in which it is reiterated that the chairs of the Council's subsidiary organs, including those of sanctions committees, should provide all Member States with informal periodic briefings on their activities, as appropriate, and indicate the time and venue of these meetings in good time, since Member States are the ones responsible for implementing many of those committees' recommendations and must coordinate the implementation of binding Security Council resolutions. The committees should therefore have a high-profile presence in the meetings of the Security Council.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need to better enable the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and

security in the event that its members are unable to meet in person. In that connection, we draw attention to the Council's efforts to ensure that its work continues virtually, in particular the remote voting process, which has made it possible to adopt many important resolutions, and we note that the Council has held regular informal meetings, on the understanding that it will explore, whenever that becomes possible, ways to ensure continuity of formal operation in the future.

We welcome the relentless pursuit of greater coordination and cooperation among the main organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other relevant bodies, so as to enable the Organization to work rapidly and effectively and support the Security Council in implementing its mandate. In that connection, we emphasize the role of regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

While we value the readiness of the Security Council to prevent conflicts from erupting and resolve them peacefully through negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and other peaceful means set out in Chapter VI of the Charter, we underscore the need for the Council to support the good offices of the Secretariat, regional organizations and Member States to address conflicts, thereby helping to alleviate human suffering and build thriving societies, and the need to make greater use of the latter approach in view of the unprecedented circumstances facing the international community because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Kingdom of Bahrain has emphatically supported the Secretary-General's call for a worldwide ceasefire.

In conclusion, we look forward to holding additional meetings on the development of the Council's working methods, promoting greater harmony among the organs of the Organization and bringing about the changes required to ensure that the Council can fulfil its mandate to the fullest extent possible, in keeping with our belief in the essential role that the Organization plays.

Annex 16**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the United Nations, Rubén Darío Cuéllar Suárez**

[Original: Spanish]

Allow me to congratulate the Estonian delegation on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We are certain that, despite the circumstances arising from the coronavirus disease health crisis, it will do an excellent job. Accordingly, we welcome its present initiative to join with the delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, in its capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, to convene today's meeting.

At present, the work of both the permanent and the non-permanent members in the Security Council is still governed by the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, which were adopted in 1946. That is why we consider the working methods to be one of the most important issues for the Security Council to address, since the knowledge and mastery of the non-permanent members puts them on an equal footing with the permanent members in assuming their responsibilities before the Security Council and in carrying out their work in it. Furthermore, their presence also allows the general membership of the Organization to have a better and more complete understanding of workings of the Council. They create the framework that allows each and every member of the Council to participate fully, to contribute to informed discussions and to play a full and meaningful role in the work of the Council. It is a matter of all members having ownership of the issues on the agenda and fulfilling their respective responsibilities to their own people and to the membership at large.

The working methods also seek to ensure that conflicts on the Council's agenda, as well as emerging threats, are addressed in a timely manner and that meeting formats and approaches are adapted to provide the best chance of achieving meaningful outcomes in the Council's deliberations. It is precisely the development of initiatives to improve the working methods of the Security Council that is decisive for the Council's ability to fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security in a transparent and balanced manner and, above all, in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We therefore believe that the improvements and updates that have been made are fundamental, especially since they result from a particular effort of the non-permanent members.

For that reason, we cannot speak of progress in improving the Council's working methods without referring to the outstanding efforts of previous Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions. For example, in August 2017 Japan played a decisive role in the adoption of revised note S/2017/507, which has become a useful reference for all, particularly newly elected members, and Kuwait contributed to recent updates through the adoption of numerous notes by the President. While the revised text of note 507 is comprehensive and balanced, we stress the need for the Council to regularly review progress and to ensure the note's full and effective implementation.

Despite those updates and improvements, in our view the participation of Member States in the Council's decision-making process remains low owing precisely to its working methods and the lack of transparency under the pretence of effective, efficient and rapid decision-making.

While we highlight the fact that informal briefings have become a regular practice in recent years, we consider it important to involve all Member States, in particular those especially affected by a given issue, and to consult them on the basis of an agreed framework before any decision is taken, in accordance with Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter of the United Nations.

We stress the need for the Council's working methods to provide for timely interaction with the Secretariat on emerging risks and threats to international peace and security. We believe that that is of the utmost importance in preventing the development, escalation and resurgence of conflict. We also highlight the improved election procedures for the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and encourage more elected members to be appointed penholders on various issues and to work towards the effective implementation of what has already been agreed. However, it would be important that at least one informal meeting of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions be held during the selection process.

While all the improvements are important to ensure the transparency of the Council, they remain insufficient. There is still room for improvement in order to enhance the Council's conduct of the tasks and responsibilities entrusted to it in the United Nations Charter. Therefore, the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions should continue to assess all the gaps in the application of note 507 with a view to ensuring the full implementation of the best practices it contains. It should also consider the proposals of Member States on ensuring transparency, inclusiveness and interactive exchanges in the Council's work.

We should be very clear that, while the latest version of note 507 can be considered an achievement in itself because of the spirit of cooperation and compromise required to bring positions closer together, both within the Council and among Member States at large, we should not, however, merely acknowledge the improvement. The working methods are a continuous process that goes beyond the revision of notes and other positions. It is essential that, based on the work of the Informal Working Group, progress be made on reforms that will result in a Council that, like its rules of procedure, sets aside ideological positions and is in step with the twenty-first century challenges facing the international community.

Finally, we agree that, for all those reasons, we must maintain the momentum of cooperation that has enabled us to get this far and continue our collective efforts to ensure that the codification of best practices shifts from a mere exercise to actual implementation within the Security Council, both in its day-to-day work and in the taking of major decisions.

Annex 17**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations**

We thank the Permanent Mission of Estonia for holding this open video-teleconference (VTC) and for inviting Member States to provide their written views on the implementation of presidential note S/2017/507. We expect the meeting to further our collective commitment to a more open, transparent and accountable Security Council.

We commend the Security Council for its growing attention to the improvement of its working methods. In that regard, we congratulate Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on its active leadership of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, building upon the recent steps taken by Japan and Kuwait, to name but the two most recent Chairs of that subsidiary body. We wish also to highlight the pivotal role played by elected members in bringing fresh perspectives and proposals to that field. Finally, we express our appreciation for the briefings by Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, as Chair of the Informal Working Group; by Karen Landgren, Executive Director of the Security Council Report; and by Edward Luck of Columbia University.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has posed new challenges to the way we work, demanding creative thinking and, above all, flexibility. Technical difficulties and procedural challenges must be overcome through innovative solutions in order to allow the main organs of the United Nations to continue operating even at this difficult juncture. The decision to adopt a written voting procedure and to use VTC to hold meetings are the two main examples of measures that have been implemented by the main United Nations organs in order to continue their activities.

However, we still face challenges in ensuring the necessary levels of transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council. We would like to highlight one specific topic: publicity. Due attention must be given to the announcement and webcasting of meetings so as to ensure that all Member States know what is being discussed in the Security Council. It is of the utmost importance that the Security Council continue to communicate with the wider membership even if it cannot hold in-person meetings. This is indispensable to consolidating the progress made in the past 15 years in the area of inclusion and accountability. Open VTCs allow all Member States to follow the Council's deliberations. It is also paramount to allow non-members of the Council to participate in Council discussions whenever their interests are especially affected.

We welcome the measures adopted to include on the Security Council's website information on the VTC meetings and adopted outcomes, as well as up-to-date information on the informal programme of work.

By avoiding setbacks in the area of transparency, the Security Council will demonstrate its capacity to effectively adapt to new realities. The Council must always operate within the letter and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations as it acts on behalf of the entire membership. In that regard, it must be stressed that transparency and accountability are inextricable elements of the responsibility Member States conferred upon the members of the Security Council to act on their behalf. Therefore, effectiveness cannot be ensured without transparency.

Regarding presidential note 507, the following issues still require our particular attention.

First, regular coordination, cooperation and interaction with the principal organs of the United Nations should be reinforced. The relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly must be complementary, as provided

for in the United Nations Charter. Better coordination will help avoid instances of Security Council encroachment on the authority and mandate of the General Assembly and their consequent erosion. We encourage the holding of more regular and substantive consultations with the General Assembly to review work plans or consult on specific issues of mutual concern. We also highlight the ongoing need for the submission of a more analytical and comprehensive annual report, as well as of special reports on substantive issues.

Secondly, the Security Council should tap into the advice and experience of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). Unfortunately, the synergies between the PBC and the Security Council still fall short of ideal. As Chair of the PBC Guine-Bissau configuration, Brazil firmly believes that Member States must work harder to improve coordination, coherence and cooperation between those two bodies. The PBC can play an advisory role in different areas, including preventive diplomacy. It can provide cross-regional perspectives and assist in the dialogue with regional and subregional organizations. It can also work together with the Security Council to marshal much-needed resources and attention to countries that are facing a risk of relapse into conflict.

Thirdly, the Security Council should enhance consultations with troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs/PCCs). The perspectives of TCCs/PCCs must have a bearing on the review and drawdown of peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The Security Council should continue to work towards more effective and substantive consultations with TCCs/PCCs in a regular and timely manner.

Fourthly, the Security Council should prioritize the holding of public meetings. Wherever possible, the Council's meetings should be public. Private meetings and informal consultations should be seen as exceptions.

Fifthly, the wider membership should have better access to the subsidiary bodies. The access of affected Member States to the Security Council's subsidiary bodies should also be ensured, as appropriate. Article 31 of the United Nations Charter clearly states that any Member of the United Nations that is not a member of the Security Council may participate in the discussion of any question whenever the Council considers that the interests of that member are specially affected. There is no reason not to apply that provision to the subsidiary bodies.

Sixthly, the decision-making process within the Security Council should be improved, including through better distribution of penholderships. A fair and adequate distribution of penholderships, as well as co-penholderships, among both permanent and elected members will help foster greater levels of transparency and accountability in the Council. The Chairs of the subsidiary bodies should be invited to be co-penholders on issues pertaining to their activities. A better distribution of penholderships will ensure that elected members have the necessary opportunities to substantively contribute to the Council's activities.

Brazil considers that, if brought together, that set of measures, which is not exhaustive, would contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of Council decisions. A more open and transparent Council would probably deliver more effective decisions as its legitimacy would be enhanced. An opaque body, on the other hand, tends to be less effective given that, in some instances, its decisions are not fully grasped by the wider membership and might not take into account their concrete needs and expectations.

Finally, we underscore that improvements in the working methods cannot be seen as a substitute for a structural reform of the Security Council, with the creation of new permanent and non-permanent seats. As we have stated on different

occasions, the Council's effectiveness goes beyond procedure: it also relates to structure and composition. A structural reform would lead to a broad-based revision of the Council's working methods, with positive results in the areas of transparency, accountability and representativeness, resulting in a more effective and legitimate body. As we approach the United Nations seventy-fifth anniversary, we encourage all Member States to redouble their efforts to reform the Security Council, bringing it up to date with our contemporary reality.

Annex 18
Statement by the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations

[Original: English and French]

Canada would like to thank Estonia for convening this early open debate and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for its leadership of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions. Their dedication to these issues is clear, and we salute their commitment.

The Council has been a lynchpin of the global order for 75 years. Two months ago, we would not have imagined the world we live in today. Nor can we fully predict the world we will face in two weeks, two months and two years from now. What has become clear, however, is that the world needs a Council with the wherewithal and clarity of purpose to respond to a global crisis.

While the Council is its own institution, with rules of procedure, precedent and process, the beating heart of the Council is the membership. Today we would like to recognize the elected members of the Council, in particular, for their incredible efforts to adapt to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis and its myriad facets. What they have accomplished proves that the Council can indeed evolve. They have demonstrated that the Council cannot depend on the old ways of working.

Evolution has been an area of focus for elected members for many years. Recent initiatives such as the innovative retreat convened by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, along with Kuwait, in Kingstown in January are now paying dividends.

Canada believes that, fundamentally, the workload of the Council should be shared across all its members. That means leveraging the ideas and energy that elected members bring to the Council.

We continue to support efforts for greater consultation, transparency and burden-sharing in the distribution of Chairs of the subsidiary bodies of the Council. As a first step, elected members should take on new penholder roles to move the Council away from processes that limit the exchange of ideas and input. The current system reduces the horizon for the Council at a time in which new and creative approaches are critical.

Elected members also understand the challenges of assessing the Council's work when watching with one's nose pressed up against the glass. Like Canada, they are some of the strongest advocates of transparency of the Council. With physical distancing measures, the lack of transparency of the Council has become more acute. Nevertheless, we applaud Estonia's efforts during its presidency this month, and those of the Dominican Republic beforehand, to leverage technology in the service of effectiveness, efficiency and inclusivity. There is clearly more to do in that regard. As an example, open debates should allow for the full and active participation of all interested Member States in the official United Nations language of their choice.

The global pandemic carries significant economic repercussions and will have long-lasting impacts on peace and security. This demands that the Security Council focus more on conflict prevention and economic security. If elected to the Council, Canada will continue to focus on the economic dimensions of international peace and security to make sure the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable are heard. This will be all the more important in a post-COVID-19 world.

We also believe that the Council can do more to institutionalize linkages with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). We welcome the practice of informal interactive dialogues between the PBC and Council on countries and regions where

both organs have important roles to play, such as the Sahel. The Council could also consider inviting the PBC Chair or Chairs of its country-specific configurations to join Council missions to countries where both bodies are engaged.

The PBC has recently strengthened its advisory role to the Council by providing written advice on thematic, regional and country issues ahead of open debates and mission mandate renewals, including regarding West Africa and the Sahel, the Central African Republic, and youth, peace and security. We hope to see that become standard practice, and believe the Council should consider a standing referral to the PBC of countries undergoing United Nations mission transitions. This would help ensure that adequate attention is paid to addressing root causes of conflict, including economic insecurity, and longer-term risks to peace so as to avoid relapses and the need for a return of peacekeepers.

The Council needs to better leverage its role in the broader United Nations system. The annual report to the General Assembly should be substantive, informative and timely and work to strengthen the linkages between these bodies.

As Chair of the Working Group of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, Canada would welcome opportunities to improve the efficiency of both bodies through greater exchanges of information. This year, Canada worked effectively with all delegations to bring an innovative approach and reform the Committee's annual report to align with the Secretary General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

Another crucial element of the Security Council's evolution needs to be limitations on the use and threat of use of the veto. Canada calls on all that have yet to do so to join the French-Mexican initiative and the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes.

In that regard, Canada is working with partners towards a future reformed, more inclusive and democratic Council — a larger Council that addresses historic injustices in its membership, with corrections to regional underrepresentation. But, without adding to the imbalance of privilege, our strategic goal remains elimination of the veto.

Above and beyond the incremental recommendations contained in presidential note S/2017/507, Canada also believes far more needs to be done to make the Security Council gender-responsive. The meaningful participation of women will be even more critical as the current pandemic exacerbates inequalities around the world. With the adoption of new working methods, more must be done to integrate women civil society briefers into Council meetings. Women must not be relegated to participating in informal briefings and side events.

Finally, please accept our gratitude once again for your leadership, Mr. President, in convening this open debate and compiling and circulating the input of all Member States. Canada looks forward to participating in future such meetings, and to advancing the work of the Informal Working Group as a Council member for the period 2021–2022 if we are fortunate enough to be elected.

Annex 19**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Matters. We are grateful for the opportunity of this debate and believe it to be a crucial discussion in which Member States can provide input on ways to improve and support the work of the Security Council, in terms of both the transparency and the efficiency of this body, in view of the unprecedented experience that we are facing.

Since mid-March, we have witnessed how the Council has been adapting to new working formats under the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) measures. We appreciate the efforts made by China and the Dominican Republic as Presidents during the months of March and April, respectively, as well as by your country, Sir, which holds the presidency in May, for having recognized our concerns about maintaining the working methods achieved prior to the pandemic, which has made it possible to implement a set of measures designed to ensure that the Council holds as many meetings as possible in a transparent and participatory manner.

Chile has been very attentive to this process. We have therefore supported the initiatives presented by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group, to which we belong, through letters to the presidency requesting the use of all possible tools to maintain standards of transparency. We support the letter circulated by Switzerland in its capacity as Chair of the group, in which, due to the importance of the topic, the open transmission of the Security Council meeting held in April at which the Secretary-General reported on the impact of COVID-19 was requested, although in the end it was closed.

Our emphasis on transparency seeks to help the Security Council in the legitimization of its work and is essential to meeting the demands for multilateral responses to new threats and unprecedented situations in carrying out its work. In that context, we would like to make four points.

As a member of the ACT group, Chile will continue to support the promotion of transparency, as well as accountability, in the Security Council's decision-making. We believe that the achievements and progress made in matters of Council reform should be reflected more than ever in the use of new technologies to facilitate decision-making, especially during global crises/pandemics, which prevent the face-to-face operation of meetings, altering conventional working methods.

In relation to the open debates, it has been a good advance to send the presidential statements for circulation as a Security Council document, but we also believe that it has already been demonstrated that we are technologically capable of allowing representatives interested in speaking directly to be heard, and we encourage the members of the Security Council to continue exploring this option.

We note that during the Security Council open debate on youth, peace and security (see S/2020/346), held in April, representatives of civil society were included to share their experiences with the Council. We hope that will set a precedent for future discussions of this kind while face-to-face meetings are restricted due to COVID-19.

We are confident that Security Council members will be able to adopt a draft resolution on COVID-19 and its impact on all sensitive areas of international peace and security. A consensus document of the Security Council would be a sign that there is the multilateral will to deal with this challenge by underlining that this

process, in addition to the importance of transparency in the Security Council's decision-making on key issues, would be one of the most concrete ways to strengthen and revitalize the United Nations as a whole.

For Chile, the defence and strengthening of multilateralism will continue to be a priority, for which the reform of the Council is fundamental to legitimizing not only decisions on international peace and security, but also on the capacity of the United Nations to be present on the ground in time for the effective protection of those who need us most in the most challenging times.

Annex 20

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations on behalf of the Group of Like-minded States on Targeted Sanctions

I would like to thank the Estonian presidency and the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions for convening this open debate. I also thank the briefers for their remarks. This statement is made on behalf of the Group of Like-minded States on Targeted Sanctions — Austria, Belgium, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

Ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council includes the strengthening of fair and clear procedures and due process in United Nations subsidiary bodies such as the sanctions committees.

December 2019 marked the tenth anniversary of the Office of the Ombudsperson to the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. The Office of the Ombudsperson provides important due process guarantees in the listing and delisting procedures of that sanctions regime.

At the anniversary event, held on 17 December 2019, the various briefings demonstrated and acknowledged the achievements of the Office since its establishment. The mechanism has a real impact on individuals' rights. The role of the Ombudsperson has also been recognized by different regional and national courts.

The Office of the Ombudsperson should be able to carry out its mandate in an independent, effective and timely manner, as stated in resolution 2368 (2017). The members of the Group of Like-minded States on Targeted Sanctions are still concerned that this independence is undermined by the current contractual status and institutional arrangements for the Office of the Ombudsperson in the Secretariat. We urge the Secretary-General to strengthen the capacity of the Office of the Ombudsperson and to make the necessary arrangements to ensure its continued ability to carry out its mandate independently and effectively. The Office must also be given the necessary resources and support.

The Office of the Ombudsperson is mandated to review cases from the ISIL and Al-Qaida sanctions list only. There are 13 other sanctions committees, which provide no independent and effective review of sanctions. Due process concerns exist in relation to other Security Council sanctions regimes. Courts and tribunals are increasingly facing questions in relation to sanctions regimes without an Ombudsperson mechanism and have underlined their lack of due process protection.

For this reason, we ask the Council to address these concerns by creating an Ombudsperson mechanism that provides equivalent protection for other sanctions regimes. To support these discussions, Belgium and Switzerland hosted a retreat in November 2019 to discuss possible ways to improve due process in all the sanctions regimes. The meeting note, entitled "Due process in UN targeted sanctions: old challenges, new approaches", has recently been published on the website of the United Nations University.

The concept note for today's meeting (S/2020/374, annex) outlines the scenarios where the Council acts in ordinary and extraordinary circumstances. We recall that sanctions are always extraordinary for the targeted individuals and deeply affect their lives. The Council can show agility in tailoring independent and effective review mechanisms for all the sanctions regimes.

Furthermore, in the current circumstances, the Security Council needs to ensure business continuity in its subsidiary bodies. Sanctions committees shall carry on their mandate in a timely and effective manner.

We all have an interest in the Security Council imposing targeted sanctions to counter breaches of international law and proliferation, to constrain terrorism, to staunch the flow of arms into war zones, to combat human rights abuses and to constrain spoilers of peace processes.

We must strengthen the legitimacy, and thereby the effectiveness, of these Council actions through adequate due process guarantees for the individuals targeted by them. The Group of Like-minded States on Targeted Sanctions therefore urges the Security Council and the Secretary-General to continue their efforts to ensure that due process is afforded and human rights are respected, both in the process of imposing sanctions and in subsequent implementation measures.

Annex 21
Statement by the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations, Rodrigo A. Carazo

[Original: Spanish]

Costa Rica endorses the statement made by Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland, on behalf of the Accountability, Transparency and Coherence group and the statement made by Ambassador Milenko Skoknic Tapia, Permanent Representative of Chile, on behalf of the Group of Like-Minded States on Targeted Sanctions.

In my national capacity, I congratulate Estonia on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We welcome the convening of this debate and the contributions of Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, and Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report.

In discussing the working methods of the Security Council, it is important to recognize the progress made since the first note 507 (S/2006/507). Japan made great strides in 2016 and 2017, during its chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, by updating the note and developing the *Working Methods Handbook*. More recently, in 2019, the Security Council adopted eight of the nine presidential notes proposed during Kuwait's term as Working Group Chair.

China and the Dominican Republic also deserve recognition for having adopted agile working methods during the current novel coronavirus crisis, which have allowed the Security Council to continue its work with minimal disruption. However, Costa Rica regrets that internal divisions persist and that it has not been possible to adopt a resolution on a global ceasefire, in line with the appeal by the Secretary-General, or one recognizing coronavirus disease as a threat to international peace and security.

With regard to ensuring the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Security Council, I would highlight two issues addressed in the notes adopted under the Kuwaiti Working Group chairmanship.

First, the annual report of the Security Council must be submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations. The note on this topic includes useful elements, such as holding the Council to deadlines to ensure that the report is duly prepared and submitted to the General Assembly in a timely manner, as well as establishing a cycle of one calendar year — which, however, went unmet in 2019. There being no clear indication as to the applicable deadlines for the internal discussion and presentation of the report for that period, Costa Rica trusts that it will indeed be duly presented to the membership before 21 June. Nor were considerations of content closely tied to transparency and accountability addressed as Member States wish them to be.

Accountability involves much more than submitting insipid reports that list activities, without analysing or explaining them, on the major events affecting international peace and security in the period under review. Accountability means objectively and transparently reporting on and outlining achievements, challenges, lessons learned and the road ahead. This is what the Member States expect, as established in General Assembly resolutions on reports of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly.

In this regard, Costa Rica calls on the Security Council to act on the comments States make during the presentation of the report. While action was taken in this regard under Sam Kutesa's presidency of the General Assembly, on 4 December 2014, no response was ever received from the Security Council. This must be a two-way relationship. Basic respect for the authority of the General Assembly would see the Security Council suspend its meetings for the whole duration of the General Assembly's consideration of the report, and the principal representatives in attendance at those meetings of the Assembly.

The second topic, which has also undergone major changes but can still be improved, is that of the penholders. Costa Rica urges further effort to implement informal practices to facilitate greater participation by all members, permanent and non-permanent, in this important work of the Security Council. The current list of penholders reflects the fact that most topics are still assigned to permanent members.

If the Council is to be truly inclusive, its members must have equal scope to initiate and preside over the drafting of resolutions, presidential statements and press statements, and such practice must be incorporated into the Council's working methods. Such practices are exactly what is needed to make the Council more agile, since they will allow for initiatives ensuring that the Council takes timely action for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The possibility of one or more members being able to intervene from the outset in the negotiation and drafting of a product, as Kuwait proposed during its chairmanship of the Informal Working Group, would improve not only participation but also effectiveness and efficiency in the working methods of the Security Council. It is important that countries with knowledge and experience of a particular topic, or which chair a subsidiary body, be able to make their contributions. Co-penholdership, consultations and information-sharing would improve decision-making and make for a democratic Security Council.

In this regard, I would like to recall the note by the President of the Security Council of 14 April 2014 (S/2014/268) and the need for its provisions to be implemented, and to stress the need for measures to ensure that such consultations are open to all States Members of the United Nations, especially interested States, as established in that note.

In conclusion, the Security Council must be tireless, consistent and persistent in its application of new practices that improve transparency and inclusivity — this is the focus of the two issues discussed. Such practices should improve its interaction and dialogue with non-Council member States and with the General Assembly, since, as established in the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council when acting — and when failing to do so — represents the entire membership. The Council, as established in the most recent update of note 507 in 2017 (S/2017/507), should step up its efforts to raise awareness among Member States and other organizations of the decisions of and other relevant information from the Council's subsidiary bodies.

Annex 22

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, Ana Silvia Rodríguez Abascal

The coronavirus disease pandemic has tested the United Nations capacity to maintain its operational ability to continue its work and to make decisions regarding the disease.

We acknowledge the numerous efforts to safeguard the work of the Security Council, transparency and the participation of Member States through the use of temporary, extraordinary and provisional working methods. However, such methods are not sufficient, for they do not allow the participation of a State non-member of the Security Council in a closed videoconference (VTC) when a topic affecting it specifically is being discussed, as established by rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council. Nor are Member States able to fully participate in open VTCs as they would in open debates. In this regard, we emphasize that such methods respond only to the current and exceptional circumstances and cannot in any way become a regular occurrence for future scenarios.

We reiterate our support for comprehensive reform of the Security Council, including of its working methods, with a view to making it a transparent, democratic and representative body, in line with the evolution of the United Nations and international relations.

The expansion of the Security Council should encompass permanent and non-permanent members alike, aimed at correcting the insufficient representation of developing countries. Such expansion should include an increase of new permanent members: at least two African countries, two Asian developing countries and two Latin American and Caribbean countries. The Council should comprise no less than 26 members.

Effective measures are needed to eliminate exclusionary practices and ensure genuine participation and democratization in the Council's work and decision-making, including the elimination of the veto. However, until the veto is eliminated, any new seats in the category of permanent membership must have the same prerogatives and rights as the current members, including the veto power.

In any case, any State directly involved in or particularly affected by a matter under discussion must always be allowed to participate in deliberations and decision-making on matters directly concerning it, as established by Article 31 of the Charter of the United Nations.

In accordance with Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, its members recognize that the Security Council, in discharging its functions, acts on their behalf, and consequently the work of the Council is the collective responsibility of all Member States. Greater transparency in the work of the Council would thus help us fulfil that collective responsibility. We advocate, *inter alia*, for transparent informal transparent; the adoption of the Council's rules of procedures, which remain provisional to date; the issuance of minutes of informal consultations, which should be the exception rather than the rule; and an annual report that is thorough and analytical.

While we recognize the increase in the number of public meetings, including open debates and wrap-up sessions, over recent years, as well as the unprecedented process of consultation and exchange with Member States in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, there remains a tendency for the Security Council to work mainly in closed formats, to make decisions without addressing

the concerns of Member States and to force decisions on draft resolutions when considerable differences in their content still exist.

Likewise, we regret that the Council submits annual reports to the General Assembly that consist of merely descriptive accounts of Council meetings, activities and decisions, rather than reflecting a comprehensive explanatory analysis of Council work in order to assess the causes and implications of its decisions.

In addition to reforming its working methods, the Security Council must align its functions with the mandate conferred upon it by the Charter of the United Nations. Interference in matters beyond its purview must cease — in particular, those concerning the mandate of the General Assembly. Precisely in accordance with its mandate under the Charter, the Security Council must focus on addressing the most urgent problems representing threats to international peace and security. Chapter VII should be invoked as intended — as a measure of last resort.

We reject the selective manipulation of the Council's methods and practices based on political agendas and domination — in particular, attempts to introduce issues that are not part of its agenda — as well as the politicization of other parties to be considered by the body.

We support the intergovernmental negotiations in the General Assembly, which must remain transparent and inclusive. It is only through debate, in compliance with the established timelines and frameworks, that we will be able to define the way forward, with the consensus of all Member States.

We reiterate the need for a reformed, democratic, transparent and efficient Security Council that represents the interests of all States Member of the Organization in order to preserve multilateralism and the long-term credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations.

Annex 23

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations

Cyprus will focus its comments on the working methods of the Council pertaining to three areas: how it interacts with the Member States that are on its agenda; how it interacts with Member States in which it has deployed peacekeeping operations; and how it relates to peace processes and agreements brokered under the auspices of the United Nations.

As a general principle, the Council should be in dialogue with the Member States on its agenda, so as not to make decisions for them without them. Without prejudice to the fact that the Council alone makes its decisions, since such decisions deeply affect the countries they concern, they need to be made after taking into account all relevant information at the disposal of the Council, including from the perspective of the affected State. We would suggest that, when the Council discusses a situation in closed consultations, it invite the affected State to offer its perspective then exit the room before the Council begins its deliberations. There should also be regular dialogue between Member States on the Council's agenda and the President of the Council, which should provide affected States with information regarding the work of the Council that directly affects them. In our view, affected States should not have to rely on the good will of members of the Council, or the penholder, to provide them with such information.

Increased interaction and transparency are even more warranted in cases where the Council has deployed a peacekeeping operation in a Member State, not only because good cooperation between the host Government and the operation is crucial for the latter's success, but also because host-country consent and cooperation have been central to peacekeeping since its inception. All the suggestions in the preceding paragraph also apply in respect of peacekeeping operations, but dialogue could also be enhanced in more technical bodies, given the operational nature of the issues they consider. One example is meetings with troop-contributing countries, where it is not obvious to us why a host country cannot participate, at least in part of the meeting. Lastly, when considering peacekeeping operations, the Council should make decisions based on the situation on the ground and what is in the best interests of security and stability, and not on political grounds.

As the organ entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council must be kept informed about peace processes and agreements brokered by the United Nations so as to be able to endorse such agreements and to play a responsible role in their implementation. This requires better synergy between the Council and the Secretary-General. It also requires more consistent practice on the part of the Council so as to develop some clear benchmarks for its endorsement of a peace agreement, notably compatibility with the Charter and acquis, norms and principles of the United Nations, and the satisfaction of criteria such as provisions for the administration of justice, particularly where serious international crimes have been committed. A closer and more organic link between the work of the Council and peace processes and agreements would also enable the Council to better assume its responsibilities in terms of specific measures it could take to support a peace agreement it has endorsed, including through peacekeeping and peacebuilding tools. The Council must find a way to preserve and exercise its mandated responsibilities when other United Nations organs have a role or involvement in peacemaking.

Annex 24**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations, Luis Gallegos Chiriboga**

[Original: Spanish]

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on the manner in which you have conducted the work of the Security Council during the first 15 days of your presidency.

I wish to express my appreciation for the presentation made by Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, whose leadership on this issue I also wish to highlight. I also acknowledge the presentations by Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report, and Edward C. Luck of Columbia University.

Today I will refer first to the Council's working methods in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and then to the working methods of the Council in general.

First, Ecuador wishes to highlight the efforts made by the members of the Security Council to ensure the continuity of its work in the context of extreme circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic. I reiterate our special appreciation to the Estonian delegation as well as to the delegations of the Dominican Republic and China, which chaired the Council in April and March, respectively.

While acknowledging the opportunity to present this written statement, I wish to underline that, ideally, interested delegations should be able to participate directly in Council discussions, as provided for in rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure. The Arria Formula meeting commemorating 75 years from the end of the Second World War on European soil is an example of the use of technological solutions.

However, so long as technological challenges persist and the practice of written interventions continues, I believe that the latter should be requested and received in advance so that both permanent and non-permanent members can familiarize themselves with the criteria, priorities and recommendations of other delegations. The briefers' presentations could also be circulated in advance so that we can respond to them. On the other hand, I view the distribution of press elements as a good practice that should continue. They should always be distributed in writing.

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed both the strengths and weaknesses in the working methods of all the organs of the system, including the Security Council. That experience has forced us to revitalize our working methods in order to make the work of the Council more resilient and, above all, ensure its continuity in any context, even the most difficult.

This brings me to the second part of my statement, on the working methods of the Security Council in general.

The subject of this debate no doubt relates to one of the most crucial questions affecting the Organization. Effective working methods promote not only the vitality of the Security Council but also that of the entire United Nations. For that reason, in considering the modernization of working methods, account should be taken not only of the procedural flow and internal communications between Council members and between the Council and its subsidiary organs, but also between the Council and the other organs of the system, and between its permanent and non-permanent members and the other States Members of the Organization.

During the General Assembly debate held on 25 November 2019 (see A/74/PV.34), on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council, I referred to the need to put an end to the dual-door Council, which separates not only the members of the Council from the rest of the delegations but also permanent members from non-permanent members. Although Ecuador will continue to raise this issue in the context of the process of Security Council reform, which is not the subject of today's debate, this is a factor that can be overcome through an improvement in working methods, without any need to reform the Charter.

The revitalization of the Council's working methods will yield a body that is capable of meeting, without exception, its obligations in terms of ensuring international peace and security. We support the full and effective implementation of presidential note S/2017/507 and all existing provisions on the issue.

To that end, greater transparency is required in the process of drafting and discussing resolutions. There is a need for greater objectivity in the elaboration of a text so that it can encompass the perspectives of the 15 members of the Council and, ideally, of the entire membership.

Discussions and meetings should be held on an existing solid basis of information that includes verified statistics, projections and proposed solutions — not just the general information contained in the concept notes, which are certainly very useful, but also comprehensive information that allows for operational results and helps to avoid situations in which talks are limited to purely philosophical discussions.

My delegation acknowledges the progress made on transparency in the Security Council but stresses that much remains to be done. While acknowledging that certain issues have delicate aspects that may require discretion and prudence, we believe that this can never serve as a pretext for institutionalizing secret diplomacy. Explanatory records must be available for all issues considered, as they would also grant full legitimacy to the decisions taken.

We acknowledge and appreciate the opening and closing briefings provided by each Council presidency, a practice whose continuation we encourage. I also take this opportunity to thank in particular the Dominican Republic and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for their efforts to help the Latin American and Caribbean Group countries better follow the Council's work.

The achievement of greater transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the Security Council is our common responsibility, not just that of its members. For that reason, in January Ecuador joined the Franco-Mexican initiative, which is aimed at promoting the suspension of the use of the veto in the case of mass atrocities. Furthermore, in November 2018 we signed the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action in cases involving genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In conclusion, while the Security Council acts on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations on the basis of Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, that representation also means that it has the obligation to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, as set out in that same Article, an obligation that must be fulfilled without any exceptions.

Annex 25**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I would like to commend the wise leadership of Estonia during its presidency of the Security Council for the month of May 2020, as well as its initiative to address this important issue and call for statements from the wider membership, with a view to hearing the views and proposals of countries, which is in itself a practical way to improve the working methods of the Security Council. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for her leadership of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and Ms. Karin Landgren and Mr. Edward Luke for their valuable briefings.

I wish to underscore that it is all the more important to discuss the working methods of the Council in view of the current circumstances, especially given the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic on the Council's activities and the ensuing logistical challenges that have prevented the wider membership from keeping abreast of Council proceedings. This state of affairs makes the work of the Council even less transparent. We believe that the best way to address this is by committing to implement the points set forth in document S/2017/507, to the extent possible and within logistical constraints. In this regard, we would like to stress several points that we believe to be vital to improving the working methods of the Security Council and its subsidiary organs and committees.

First, the periodic briefings given to the wider membership on the monthly programme of work of the Security Council should be developed, and the input of the wider membership should be taken into account when formulating the programme of work. Briefings should give an overview of the most important meetings, activities and visits carried out by the Council, and the chairs of the subsidiary organs and committees should also present periodic briefings before the wider membership.

Secondly, the frequency of public meetings of all kinds, whether of the Security Council or its subsidiary organs and sanctions committees, should be increased. Let us not forget that the Security Council represents and works on behalf of the wider membership, so its meetings and work must not, as a general rule, be kept from the wider membership, unless they concern matters related to the national security of a State and the State has made a request to that end.

Thirdly, it is important to ensure that the documents and reports submitted to the Security Council be made available to the wider membership and in all six official languages of the United Nations, unless they include information related to the national security of States that do not wish to make this information available to the public.

Fourthly, draft resolutions and presidential statements that come before the Security Council should be shared with the wider membership. Countries should be consulted so as to allow the wider membership the opportunity to share their views and proposals on these drafts with members of the Council.

Fifthly, it is important that the Security Council consult with States and relevant regional and subregional organizations, especially the African Union and the League of Arab States, on conflicts that are being addressed by the Council or any of its subsidiary organs or committees.

Sixthly, consultation between the Security Council and the countries that contribute troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations should be improved, in accordance with paragraph 91 of S/2017/507.

I wish to underscore that the role of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council in general, and the sanctions committees in particular, is extremely important and sensitive, because those organs follow up on the implementation of sanctions regimes and monitor compliance. It is therefore important that the working methods of those organs and committees be periodically reviewed in order to ensure that they continue to be capable of carrying out their functions in an effective and transparent manner.

In this regard, Egypt calls for the technical bodies and panels of experts of Security Council organs and committees to consult the States concerned when preparing reports that relate to them. It is important for the Chairs of the subsidiary organs and committees to invite the States concerned to participate in their meetings whenever those States are being discussed, in accordance, *inter alia*, with paragraphs 101 to 110 of S/2017/507.

In closing, we would like to note that many suggestions have been made regarding how to develop the working methods of the Security Council and its subsidiary organs and committees. What matters the most, however, is having the political will to implement them and to have the conviction that improving the Council's methods will enhance the added value of the Council and its subsidiary organs and committees, and increase its credibility before the wider membership, and, of course, vice versa.

Annex 26**Statement by the Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations, Egriselda González López**

[Original: Spanish]

We thank the Estonian presidency for having included this open debate in its programme of work, and the briefers for their presentations. El Salvador welcomes the efforts made to improve the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of all Security Council proceedings and supports the Council's greater interaction with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations bodies.

El Salvador deems it urgent to ensure the transparency of the Security Council's proceedings primarily because of the binding nature of its resolutions, which help to give legitimacy to its work. Threats to the legitimacy and efficiency of the Council's working methods must be continually and carefully considered.

As noted by the Secretary-General in the Council last month, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) represents the greatest global threat we have faced since the creation of the Organization. Furthermore, the pandemic has the potential to lead to unprecedented and disastrous consequences. However, we believe that it could also represent an opportunity to rethink what has been taken for granted for years.

In that respect, we wish to highlight the manner in which the Organization's procedures have been adapted as well as the flexibility of its working methods, with a view to enabling it to continue with its scheduled activities and respond to the great common challenges that we face.

While much can be achieved by adapting the working methods of the Council, even more can be achieved by making it transparent. In these difficult times, the challenge is to use the available tools in a creative manner, thus contributing to a culture in which better decisions are made, in a democratic environment and as a result of consultations with all interested parties.

We therefore commend and welcome the efforts made to keep the open-debate mechanism active despite the current challenges. We hope that this participation can be extended in the short term, beyond the inclusion of our statements as official documents, and that we can count on having the space and time for our statements to be heard in each of the official languages.

El Salvador will continue to participate actively in these open debates in accordance with Article 31 of the Charter of the United Nations. We believe also that this practice could be carried over to other Council meetings that take place in a more private environment through the holding of informal interactive dialogues. In such cases, regional organizations that follow or have close links with the activities of the Council could also participate.

We also wish to highlight the efforts of monthly Council presidencies to strengthen the inclusion and participation of, and accountability vis-à-vis, States that are not members of this body by issuing a programme of work for the month of their presidency and through monthly wrap-up sessions. El Salvador believes that those efforts could be strengthened through the inclusion of analytical and interactive presentations and discussions.

In addition, we call for the continued issuance, in a timely manner, of activity reports by each presidency. These should include, above all and in addition to a summary of events, a situational analysis that includes current and future threats to international peace and security.

We consider field visits to be valuable, as they give Council members a broader view of the local situation, enabling them to make sound decisions and to more effectively discharge their mandate. We deem it important to consider the participation of other relevant parties in the proceedings, including members of the General Assembly that contribute military, police and civilian contingents to peace operations.

While we acknowledge the fact that such missions can be very costly, we believe that with a view to coordinating efforts and strengthening the dynamics of the Organization, they could be carried out among the various subsidiary bodies of the Council, including the Peacebuilding Commission and the Economic and Social Council. Better coordination would give these missions greater strategic effectiveness while reducing overall costs.

With regard to the work directly related to the negotiation and renewal of the mandates of the various Security Council peace missions, we recognize that a political strategy is a central element in the formation of peace operations. Nevertheless, we believe it is critical to achieve a more democratic environment that includes the visions and objectives of all stakeholders.

We are all aware of the value of having a resolution mandate with solid and effective language that is backed by the entire Council. That is why it is so critical to update its working methods — to bring closer together the positions of all parties to conflicts, particularly those on the ground.

El Salvador believes that the best mandate is the product of an appropriate working method reached through interactive and direct debates focused on political strategy and the best interests of all. Members will reach additional practical proposals by including the vision of each of the parties.

Under the obligations set out in the Charter of the United Nations, with particular attention to Article 24, paragraph 3, the Security Council is required to submit an annual activity report to the General Assembly. Let us also recall that, in accordance with presidential note S/2017/507 of 30 August 2017, the Council has undertaken to submit such a report in the second quarter of the following year.

For El Salvador, a substantive increase in the participation of the entire United Nations membership in the work of the Security Council means greater interaction with regard to the annual report that this organ submits to the General Assembly. In that connection, we regret that, despite repeated calls, the Council has not fulfilled its commitment, thus undermining the ability of General Assembly members to participate in that process.

That, in turn, could undermine long-term progress in increasing the transparency and effectiveness of the process. We urge the Council to make the necessary arrangements to expedite the adoption and subsequent submission of its annual report and to take the necessary measures to enable it to meet the deadline set for its submission, as set out in note 507.

My country appreciates the fact that the Security Council is holding Arria Formula meetings, as they provide a space for dialogue with actors directly involved in various situations that threaten international peace, security and stability. However, these cannot replace formal Council meetings. Whenever possible, the Council should promote the use of informal formats that enable discussions on conflict prevention.

El Salvador believes that the working methods of the Security Council should support and strengthen its capacity to prevent conflict. That includes improving our understanding of the situations and of threats in the medium and long term. In that

regard, consultations with national experts, civil society and other actors can play an important role by providing information and highlighting new threats that could put global stability at risk.

We believe that improving the Council's working methods and adapting them to the evolving realities of the Council and the international context is vital to fulfilling the mandate of the United Nations Charter and to taking decisions that will ensure rapid and effective action for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Finally, we wish to express our full awareness that there are discussions and situations that need to be addressed behind closed doors. However, we continue to encourage the members of the Council to provide further details and more transparent explanations of the decisions taken and of the dynamics of this organ to the entire membership of the United Nations.

We also encourage the members of the Council to hold public meetings whenever possible and to seek interaction with the rest of the membership, as well as with other United Nations organs, regional organizations and civil society, particularly representatives of sectors affected by conflict, such as women and young people.

Annex 27

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations

Fiji congratulates Estonia on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. In early May, the world commemorated the end of the Second World War on European soil. This year, as the whole world faces the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in these unprecedented times, the United Nations celebrates its seventy-fifth anniversary.

Fiji extends its warm congratulations to the Government of Estonia for convening a highly effective and inclusive Security Council Arria Formula meeting to mark the end of the War in Europe — a war in which Fijian soldiers fought and gave their lives in Europe and in the Pacific. Fiji shared in that heartfelt commemoration in the Council with all its members.

The format, the breadth of participation and the inclusive approach that was adopted by the Council for that event was instructive of its potential for increased effectiveness and efficiency. Many of the world's leaders were able to speak directly from their countries to the international community. Through that event, the Council demonstrated its power to be inclusive and to inspire the world. Enhancing the transparency, effectiveness and efficiency of the Council's work is crucial to enhancing its role in global governance.

On 23 March, the Secretary-General called for a global ceasefire and for everyone to focus their efforts on combating the COVID-19 pandemic. That call enjoyed the support of all States Members of the United Nations.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the most destructive event since the Second World War. The world looks to the Security Council to lead a coordinated global response to this pandemic, which the Secretary-General has described as the true fight of our lives. In various ways, the pandemic sheds light on how the concepts of security are gradually being transformed.

The United Nations and the Security Council have discussed how information and communications technology (ICT) developments have fuelled cybersecurity challenges for States and how ICT has been weaponized by armed groups and militant non-State actors in ways that affect inter-State tensions and conflict.

In the same way, the Council has considered how climate change has been transforming the inter-State security context and how climate stress is increasingly reshaping the contours of inter- and intra-State conflicts.

The pandemic has also exposed the changing nature of security in an interconnected world. By breaking down supply chains and overwhelming national systems, a health crisis has the potential to grow into a broader food crisis. In highly vulnerable regions, that can fuel conflict or give rise to new conflicts.

As the international security environment changes, the Security Council will need to increase the transparency and effectiveness with which it operates, arrives at decisions and seeks to influence a far more diffuse global security context.

New working methods will allow the Security Council to listen to more diverse views on factors that shape and affect peace and security. As such, they must better analyse the many unintended consequences that events such as climate catastrophes or pandemics have on peace and security.

Fiji joined many colleagues in calling on the Council to lend its unambiguous voice to support the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. That would enable the shaping of a global response and the operation of humanitarian interventions.

Most important, it will allow for regions affected by conflicts to prevent the spread of the COVID-19.

The rest of the United Nations system may have developed well-coordinated efforts to contain and eliminate COVID-19, but we all look to the Security Council to help destroy and contain the spread of COVID-19 in the regions most affected by conflict.

Fiji acknowledges the work of the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, and its current Chair, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, and commends its efforts to improve the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Security Council's working methods.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global problem in search of global solutions. Combating it has undoubtedly been a steep learning curve for the United Nations system and the Council. On 31 March, the Security Council adopted new working procedures that allow it to operate virtually, thus providing it with the needed agility and responsiveness to respond to the changing global circumstances.

Fiji welcomes the improvements to the Council's working methods. We welcome access to information on Council meetings, Council reports, opportunities for non-Council members to participate in its open meetings and briefings made to non-Council members. They allow various Member States and experts to voice their views. In the end, they help to improve decision-making.

Fiji acknowledges recent efforts to ensure the timely submission of annual Council reports, thus giving Member States time to analyse them before they are discussed in the General Assembly. We would welcome a deeper analysis of the general underlying trends and drivers, as well as those specific to the situations being reported on.

Such an analysis could include lessons learned, challenges and recommended action for the Council, the United Nations system and other stakeholders. That may require more coordinated and collaborative action among Council members, the Secretariat and other stakeholders. The Council has subsidiary bodies, or committees, the workings of which are not visible to the broader membership, except when there are notices issued for the listing or delisting of individuals and entities. It is worth considering the participation of directly affected non-Member States in those committees' deliberations.

The Security Council has been operating under provisional rules since its establishment. The Council presides over important issues relating to international peace and security. As befits its important role and responsibilities, it is time that the Council's rules be formalized.

The Security Council must continue to strive to better fulfil its role and responsibilities. In a world of growing anxiety and unease, Fiji and people around the world look to the Council for leadership. On this our seventy-fifth anniversary, and given the changing global peace and security context, the Security Council's working methods must adapt so as to increase its effectiveness and impact, and thus build trust in the Council and in the United Nations system as a whole.

Annex 28
Statement by the Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations

Guatemala would like to express its gratitude to the Estonian delegation as President of the Security Council for convening this open debate via video-teleconference on the theme “Ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council”. We are confident that our deliberations will not only renew our collective commitment to improving the efficiency and transparency of the Security Council, but also will serve as a solid basis for the effective implementation of presidential note S/2017/507 in general, and its annex in particular, which our delegation greatly values as a guide for the Council’s work. Guatemala also wishes to express its thanks to the delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions for their contributions to this process.

Guatemala commends the efforts of the Informal Working Group, skilfully led by the current and previous Chairs, and welcomes the progress it has made on some practices and measures highlighted in note 507. However, we note that the codification of best practices is unfinished, and remains an extremely useful exercise for this body. Also, given our own experience as a non-permanent member of the Council for the period 2012-2013, we believe there is always room for improvement. In that regard, we would like to highlight three issues of relevance to the working methods of the Security Council.

First, the search for information and understanding regarding the Council’s activities remains a fundamental and legitimate request. We welcome the overall increasing trend of public Council meetings through the holding of open debates, which promote the wider participation of non-Council members and, in recent years, through the holding of numerous Arria Formula meetings, which have enabled the Council to obtain truthful information and thus be more effective in upholding its responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

We believe it is important to hold wrap-up sessions and to increase the Council’s interactions with the Peacebuilding Commission — an advisory body to the Council that plays an important role in preventing the recurrence of conflict — and the Presidents of the configurations of the Commission in charge of specific countries, as well as with other United Nations agencies. We appreciate the continued implementation of provisions of note 507 regarding the importance of maintaining communication with the Peacebuilding Commission, as an intergovernmental advisory body, as well as its configurations. Obviously, that would allow the Council to obtain reliable first-hand information, as well as precise advice on the country configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission. In addition, it would also allow for efficiencies in conflict prevention, thus advancing the concept of sustaining peace.

Secondly, in the past, the Council has been balanced, transparent and inclusive when taking important decisions on the appointment of the chairpersons of the different subsidiary bodies. That practice allowed for a more balanced approach to the consultations taking place around that process, which benefits everyone — but especially the newly elected Council members. My delegation hopes that this practice and trend will be strengthened in future. It is also necessary to ensure that the selection and appointment processes for the various expert groups are also more transparent and balanced in order to ensure the widest possible geographical and gender representation, pursuant to paragraph 111 of note 507 guidelines — indicating 1 October as the deadline for the yearly appointment of the presidents of said bodies. In that connection, we are convinced that the timely appointment of the chairs of the

subsidiary bodies will help bolster decisions related to the sanctions committees and their effective implementation.

Thirdly, as a troop-contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping operations, Guatemala attaches great value to section VIII of note 507, since the importance of holding consultations among the Security Council, the Secretariat and the countries that contribute troops and police forces is paramount for the implementation of the mandates decided by the Security Council. The interactions with the troop-contributing countries clearly increase the capacity of the Security Council to make appropriate, effective and timely decisions to fulfil its responsibilities. This coordination is relevant in the event of transitions from peacekeeping operations to special political missions as well as in eventual changes in mandates.

In conclusion, our delegation appreciates the serious work that has been done in past years to update the working methods of the Security Council. We welcome in particular the progress made in the last three years. In the light of its responsibilities, the Security Council must be accountable to the wider membership of the United Nations, but it is the elected members that are more likely to take action on improving the Council's working methods.

The best way to highlight the representative and democratic character of the Council is to strengthen the standards of accountability and transparency. Improved cooperation with the permanent members in the Council would lead to greater synergy and effectiveness around the common objective of improving its working methods, since its decisions have an impact on the entire membership of the United Nations. In this regard, Guatemala expresses its hopeful expectation that a relevant document of the Security Council could be agreed in the context of the unprecedented times in which we are living caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, considering both the urgency to act and the seriousness of the consequences of this pandemic for the international order.

Annex 29
Statement by the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations

We are grateful to the Estonian presidency of the Security Council for organizing today's open video-teleconference meeting on ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council. This is an issue of interest and importance for the entire membership of the United Nations, particularly under the current extraordinary circumstances, when the world looks to the Security Council for solutions and leadership.

We would also like to place on record our appreciation for the efforts of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines undertaken in its capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions. We also wish to thank the representative of Security Council Report for her useful briefing and for the Report's important work in providing regular reporting and analysis of the Councils' proceedings.

As the threats to the world evolve, so must the Council. New and emerging challenges to international peace and security demand that the Council be better organized, not only to keep up with the changing times but also to be effective and responsive in carrying out its responsibilities. The format of today's meeting itself is an outcome of the innovation and flexibility shown by the Council in adapting to challenging circumstances.

The consolidated presidential note S/2017/507, on the Council's working methods, not only reflects best practices built up over the years but also signals our collective ambition for a more inclusive, transparent and effective Council, one that is better able to tackle the challenges of the modern world. Among the important improvements introduced to the working methods of the Security Council in recent years are the greater channels of communication between the Council and non-member States and between the Council and other United Nations organs, including the General Assembly; the better flow of information from and to the Council; and the improvements in distribution of Council documents to non-member States.

Note 507 also contains some substantial elements that are significant for newly elected members. Newly elected members of the Council are invited to observe all meetings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies and informal consultations of the whole for a period of three months immediately preceding their term of membership. Pursuant to presidential note S/2019/993, of December 2019, the Secretariat will also provide all relevant Council communications to the newly elected members for a period of five months immediately preceding their term of membership. The meetings held at the beginning of the month by the Council President to present the Council's monthly programme of work to all Member States and the wrap-up sessions at the end of the month are also welcome innovations.

While these improvements are important in ensuring greater transparency of the Council, they remain insufficient. It is important to implement these practices in a consistent manner and not to backslide from previous decisions and commitments. We hope that the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions will continue to assess gaps in the implementation of note 507 and ensure the full implementation of the practices recommended therein. In that regard, we would like to highlight some specific areas.

The most authoritative rules on which the global order is based are precisely those agreed between States to have legally binding status. However, we have a Security Council that still works on the basis of provisional rules. While some argue that provisional rules enable the Council to have greater flexibility and adopt new

practices when the situation demands, this approach specifically limits the role of the elected members, which are left to deal with procedural uncertainties akin to the one illustrated by the parable of the blind men and the elephant.

Secondly, the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council have grown in number and importance in recent years. Given the numerous consequential decisions being made by these subsidiary bodies, one would assume that the rules governing their working methods should be transparent and consistent. Sadly, this is far from the case. Not only do these subsidiary bodies have varied working methods, but they also follow obscure practices that do not have any legal basis in the Charter of the United Nations or in resolutions of the Security Council.

For instance, there is no uniformity in the decision-making procedures of the various sanctions committees. There is a sense that too much of the work in the committees is being carried out without the full knowledge of all Council members, even though the committees mirror the composition of the Council and are nominally chaired by elected members. Nor is there any fixed practice across these committees in terms of their reporting cycles, with similarly constituted bodies handling similar work having different time periods and methodologies for reporting.

Another worrisome aspect relates to the lack of transparency and consistency in making public the decisions of these bodies. For instance, in many cases, decisions on delisting requests made to some of these bodies by sanctioned individuals and entities are not made public at all. Some subsidiary bodies do not even mention that any such request from known and listed terrorist entities or individuals was received and declined. In effect, the failed efforts of terrorists to get themselves delisted are shrouded in secrecy.

Thirdly, as mandated by Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, the Council acts on behalf of the wider membership. One of the measures fostering the Council's engagement with the wider membership is the discussion on the Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly. We support calls for the annual report to be more substantive and analytical, rather than a mere summary of the number and dates of the Council's meetings. The manner of submitting the annual report also leads to delays, thereby limiting an important opportunity for engagement of the wider membership with the Council. This engagement between the two bodies needs to be restored and strengthened.

Finally, today's debate takes place at a time when the Security Council, responding to an unprecedented global crisis, has made the transition to remote meetings and negotiations. Council members and the Secretariat have shown commendable agility and ingenuity in adapting their working methods. However, in making these adjustments, we have been confronted with the limitations of current technological platforms, particularly in terms of capacity, accessibility and security.

We are also faced with the reality that while the three aspects mentioned in the theme for today's meeting — transparency, efficiency and effectiveness — are interlinked and feed into each other, they can also force a trade-off. Looking ahead, as we adjust to the new normal and deal with the downstream implications of the current working realities, we will have to be mindful of these considerations when it comes to converting temporary innovations into established precedents.

India has long maintained that, in order to be credible and effective, both the Security Council's composition and its working methods must be updated to reflect contemporary global realities. We stand ready to support the efforts of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions in making real progress towards a Security Council that is fit for purpose.

Annex 30

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations

I thank the President of the Security Council for convening today's debate, and I would like to align myself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group.

Ireland thanks Estonia for continuing, in cooperation with Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the practice of convening annual open debates on working methods. As we have noted before, improving the Council's working methods is not an end in itself, but a way to enhance the Council's effectiveness and therefore its relevance.

This annual debate is an important forum for non-Council members to engage with the work of the Council, and this year provides us with an opportunity to emphasize the need to build on the progress achieved in December 2019 when a record number of notes of the President further codifying the Council's procedures were adopted. This accomplishment, which took place during Kuwait's term as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, is testament to the value elected members bring to the Council, and we look forward to further improvements to the day-to-day operation of the Council under the tenure of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as Chair, and Estonia as Vice-Chair, of the Informal Working Group.

Transparency, efficiency and effectiveness are always of vital importance in the work of the Council. However, in the current circumstances in which we find ourselves, they are more essential than ever. We are therefore grateful to recent Presidents of the Council for their efforts to increase the openness of the Council's work at this time, including by seeking to adopt press elements after each closed video-teleconference (VTC).

As an aspiring member of the Security Council, Ireland was pleased to note the adoption of a number of measures in the aforementioned presidential notes that will enable incoming elected members to better prepare themselves for the Council's work ahead of taking their seats in this body. In particular, providing that newly elected members will begin receiving relevant documents from 1 August in the year prior to their joining the Council and permitting newly elected members to observe informal consultations relating to the negotiation of Council outcome documents from 1 October of that year will increase new members' familiarity with the Council's functions and working methods. These changes not only assist elected members to prepare for their tenure but also improve the efficiency of the Council by ensuring smoother transitions from one year's membership to the next.

While these new measures are welcome, more must be done to empower elected members' participation in all aspects of the Council's work, including the drafting of resolutions. As the work of the Council grows, we note the need for burden-sharing and an equitable distribution of work among all members of the Council, including through a transparent process for the allocation of penholder positions that takes into account the expertise of elected members.

We echo ACT's call for increased fairness and clarity of sanctions processes and encourage the Council to strengthen the independence and impartiality of the Office of the Ombudsperson and expand the mandate of the Ombudsperson to other sanctions regimes.

We understand that new time frames adopted by the Council for the publication of its annual report are due to apply from the start of 2021. Nevertheless, we urge the Council to adopt its most recent report as soon as possible. We call once again for the inclusion of an analytical introduction in the report to enable the General

Assembly to engage in a meaningful way with the Council. In order to consider the Council's effectiveness, the Council needs to provide an analysis of its actions. Simply recounting a list of meetings held and decisions made during the preceding year does not permit such review and interaction.

Ireland welcomes the Council's adoption of novel working methods during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, including the use of written voting procedures to adopt resolutions and the inclusion of statements by Member States that are not members of the Council in the compilation document following open VTCs, such as today's. The Council must continue to show flexibility in adapting its procedures and ensure not just the continuity of its work but also its effectiveness and transparency.

We are therefore disappointed that the Council has, after almost two months, been unable to adopt a resolution in response to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire during the COVID-19 pandemic. If the Council cannot show that it is ready and able to act in the face of this unprecedented crisis, its credibility will be damaged. We would also like to see a formal adoption of a programme of work each month and formal records of meetings.

The Security Council must learn from this experience, be forward-looking and ensure it is better prepared to operate under extraordinary working conditions in future. With recent meetings of the Council demonstrating the benefit of technology and the way in which it can open up the work of the Council to the outside world, we believe there is scope in future to use VTCs to enable participation by briefers and speakers who are otherwise unable to travel to New York.

Ireland also notes that civil society access to the Council has been limited since the practice of holding virtual meetings began. Civil society organizations bring much needed expertise and experience to the work of the Council, and it is imperative that the new working methods do not become obstacles to the inclusion of civil society. We further note that it still is not possible for non-members of the Council to deliver oral statements at VTCs and welcome the presidency's clarification that if it becomes technically feasible, non-members of the Council may be able to deliver statements orally at open VTC meetings.

To conclude, Ireland believes in a Council that is effective, open and accountable and if elected to the Security Council this June, we will make that a priority of our time on the Council.

Annex 31

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations, Mariangela Zappia

First, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and for the attention that your presidency is giving to such a relevant issue as the working methods of the Security Council. Relying on you also as Vice-Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, I do hope that we can make significant strides in updating and implementing revised presidential note S/2017/507.

I would like to commend Kuwait for its work in the past two years — and now Saint Vincent and the Grenadines — as Chairs of the Informal Working Group. I trust that, under the leadership of Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, we will indeed be able to introduce new, positive practices and enhance cooperation between the monthly presidencies and the Informal Working Group.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered today by the representative of New Zealand on behalf of a number of recent elected members of the Council from all regional groups and would like to make some additional remarks in its national capacity.

Estonia has repeatedly called for more transparency since its election as a non-permanent member — and rightly so. More transparency is the only way to foster the trust of public opinion in the Organization and to achieve the common goal of strengthening multilateralism. More transparency means scheduling more open-format meetings and informative briefings, inviting more briefers from civil society, especially women briefers, and, above all, allowing better access to information.

The need for more transparency is often emphasized in the eight notes adopted by the Informal Working Group in late 2019. The notes clearly codify some Security Council working methods, and the whole membership can benefit from them, especially the 10 elected members that serve only two years on the Council. Thorough knowledge of its current procedures can help them hit the ground running. In turn, better performance of the elected members translates into easier interactions with the permanent members and increased efficiency and effectiveness of the Council as a whole.

We are now facing unprecedented circumstances. Owing to coronavirus disease (COVID-19), we are learning to meet, discuss and take decisions virtually. An unforeseen, tragic crisis has led us to change our working methods. We have managed to introduce more remote or smart-working, but that is just a first step. Never has there been a more compelling time for more transparency, more collaboration among Security Council members and an increased accessibility to the Council for the other Member States.

Furthermore, given that the United Nations premises will be physically closed at least until the end of June, Italy welcomes the letter from the Estonian presidency dated 7 May, following on the ones from China and the Dominican Republic, which calls on the Security Council to improve the efficiency of its work while retaining transparency. In that regard, we support the efforts to allow the participation of non-members of the Council in open video-teleconferences consistent with rules 37 and 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. We also support the continuation of the work of subsidiary bodies, particularly by allowing them to meet and take decisions virtually. Such improvements show that the Security Council is able not only to adapt to extraordinary circumstances but also to seize new opportunities to evolve.

As provided for in Article 24 (1) of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council is expected to make decisions that will secure effective action on behalf of the wider United Nations membership. The Security Council should therefore be accountable to the wider membership, especially when its inaction prevents the Council from fulfilling its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Recently, the Council has even failed to endorse the call of the Secretary-General for a cessation of hostilities on humanitarian grounds in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. The reasons for that inaction are the veto and the undemocratic nature of the Security Council itself. Accordingly, Italy supports all initiatives aimed at limiting the use of the veto and making the Council more accountable to the whole membership.

Ensuring accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council means, in our view, striving for the democratization of the Council. A desirable outcome of such democratization would be for the 15 members to consistently act together on equal footing. It is vitally important to us that elected members take on a more active role in the drafting and consultation process. Italy supports fairer and more equal burden-sharing among the 15 members, including in the penholdership system and the distribution of chairs of subsidiary bodies.

A fair and equal distribution of duties is consistent with a strengthened Security Council, one that is not only more transparent, effective and efficient but also more democratic, accountable and representative, especially of underrepresented regions like Africa. It is also consistent with enlarging the Security Council through non-permanent members, certainly not through members with exclusive rights. We are convinced that the Security Council will perform better with an expansion limited to non-permanent members, also taking into consideration the continuous momentum traditionally brought by the elected members in terms of proposals and new practices.

Italy has been advocating for such an improvement for years. Our goal is to improve the Security Council's working methods and reform its structure and composition. In this unique experience we are currently living, we should not limit ourselves to merely finding adaptive measures to return to business as usual; rather, we should be inspired to find new ways to work together that would ultimately allow us, as a Council, to enjoy greater authority and legitimacy.

Annex 32

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, Ishikane Kimihiro

I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Estonian presidency and to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, for organizing this open debate on improving the working methods of the Security Council, to which Japan has always been deeply committed. Japan also appreciates the tireless work of current and recent Council members towards the development of this body's working methods, including the adoption of eight new notes by the President last year under the strong leadership of Kuwait.

Japan is of the view that, in pursuing reforms of the working methods, it is important to strike the right balance between the dual needs for transparency and efficiency. To strengthen the legitimacy of the Council's decisions, the decision-making process should be as transparent as possible, allowing it to take into account different views from both inside and outside the Council. On the other hand, we should be mindful of our prime objective, which is to enhance the Council's capacity to take the best action in the most efficient and timely manner to maintain and restore international peace and security.

Japan also believes that we need to strike the right balance between our ambition and feasibility. In that respect, we should reflect on whether the rules established so far have been fully put into practice. Identifying which items in note S/2017/507 have not been adequately fulfilled, and why, would contribute to estimating the appropriate level of ambition we should maintain and finding room for further improvement to existing rules. We expect in-depth discussion will take place in the Informal Working Group under the slogan "action-oriented implementation" proposed by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Japan commends China, the Dominican Republic and Estonia for their dedication in devising and developing the working methods that have enabled the Council to continue its work under the current physical constraints caused by coronavirus disease. This format, developed to adapt to the context of the current pandemic, would serve as a good basis for considering how the Council could continue operating under similar limitations, for example, when physical meetings cannot be held owing to heavy snowfall.

Lastly, we would like to point out that while the working methods are an essential part of Security Council reform, they are not the only part. Ultimately, a comprehensive reform of the Council must include an expansion of its membership, in both permanent and non-permanent categories, to reflect current realities by adding more Member States that have the capacity and willingness to take on major responsibilities with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. Japan will continue to work with all Member States towards that goal.

Annex 33**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations, Mansour Alotaibi**

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Estonia on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May and to thank it, along with Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, for convening this virtual open debate to discuss the Council's working methods. We are pleased to see the practice of convening an annual open debate on this important issue continue, in keeping with paragraph 100 of presidential note S/2017/507, despite the exceptional circumstances we are currently facing.

The State of Kuwait also aligns itself with the statement circulated by the representative of New Zealand on behalf of a number of former elected members of the Security Council.

As we are all aware, the Security Council, the United Nations and the entire international community are facing an unprecedented global health crisis in its battle against the coronavirus disease pandemic. And with unprecedented circumstances come unprecedented working methods. In that connection, we applaud China, the Dominican Republic and Estonia, which have consecutively presided over the Council since the outbreak escalated in mid-March, for their efforts to ensure that the Council is able to meet and conduct its business remotely since the pandemic has forced the United Nations, its staff, Member States and the entire city to temporarily shut down and work remotely in an effort to help curb the spread of the virus.

We are also pleased to see that the Dominican Republic managed to hold a virtual wrap-up session at the end of its presidency. We thank both the Dominican Republic and Estonia for circulating papers on the working methods of the Security Council that contain guidelines outlining how their delegations intend to conduct the Council's work remotely during their respective presidencies.

This meeting marks the first time the State of Kuwait has participated in an open debate of the Security Council on its working methods since the end of its non-permanent membership for the 2018-2019 term, during which it chaired the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions. That experience culminated in the adoption of eight presidential notes on 27 December 2019 that contained various provisions aimed at increasing the Council's transparency and efficiency, including the transparency of informal meetings and activities of the Council, the selection process for subsidiary body Chairs and Council visiting missions, the timeline for approval of the annual report, as well as some additional proposals to improve the preparedness of incoming newly-elected members, among other issues.

From 17 to 19 January 2020, Kuwait organized a joint informal retreat on the Council's working methods along with Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the current chair of the Informal Working Group, in Kingstown. At the meeting, Council members engaged in active discussions on the Group's programme of work for the current year and on ways to achieve balance in the Council's work between transparency and efficiency. An informal summary of the retreat was prepared by Kuwait and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and issued as document S/2020/172.

From my personal experience as a former Chair of the Informal Working Group, and based on the discussions that took place during the aforementioned retreat, I can say with certainty that concrete and effective change in the working methods of the Council can only be achieved through cooperation and a genuine desire of all its members. Today's open debate and its joint organization by Estonia,

in its dual capacity as President of the Council for this month and Vice-Chair of the Informal Working Group, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Chair of the Informal Working Group is a unique precedent and a positive example of what can be achieved when Council members cooperate and support one another. So are the precedents set and progress made thus far by China, the Dominican Republic and Estonia in dealing with the pandemic's repercussions on the Council's work by adapting to the current circumstances, including through agreement on a process to vote on draft resolutions electronically, among other steps. Those are all examples of the Council ensuring the efficiency of its work while simultaneously taking steps to improve its transparency.

However, while the Council has made considerable progress in enhancing its transparency and efficiency in recent years, much remains to be done to ensure that the progress achieved thus far is not undermined. First and foremost, we must stress the importance of ensuring the full implementation of note 507, in addition to the eight presidential notes that were agreed in December 2019. While innovation and progress are important, we must also be mindful not to forget the important provisions that have already been negotiated and agreed.

In addition, we feel that it is important to continue the discussions on the issue of penholdership and develop the process for the fair allocation of responsibilities among members of the Security Council, as more work remains to be done to ensure the active and equitable participation of all members in the decision-making process, bearing in mind that this issue has been discussed at length within the Informal Working Group in recent years, including during Kuwait's membership. We hope to see concrete results in the near future.

Another important issue to consider is the question of due process within the context of the Council's subsidiary bodies, including the role of the Ombudsperson in that regard, particularly since this is an issue of great importance to many Member States outside the Council. We also urge Council members to ensure that the annual report is agreed upon and issued within the time frame outlined in presidential note S/2017/507 so that the General Assembly is able to consider and discuss it in a timely manner.

In that vein, we would like to recall Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, which clearly states that the Security Council carries out its duties on behalf of all Member States. We would therefore like to stress that the responsibility for ensuring that the Council is held accountable for its actions and its proper functioning in line with its mandate, including through its working methods, rests with the wider membership.

In conclusion, we urge all Council members to continue adapting the working methods of the Council, as needed, based on the evolution of the current conditions, while maintaining high standards of transparency and accountability, including by continuing efforts to agree on press releases after virtual meetings, in order to ensure the participation of concerned and affected countries and relevant organizations in related Council meetings, and to continue to ensure that all official Council documents are made available to the rest of the United Nations membership in a timely manner, in addition to any documents related to the Council's working methods. We also reiterate Kuwait's support for a more transparent, efficient and accountable Council through the efforts of its members, particularly in the context of the work of the Informal Working Group under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Inga Rhonda King of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and express our readiness to assist and support these efforts in any way possible.

Annex 34**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, Amal Mudallali**

We wish to congratulate Estonia on its assumption of the presidency and wish your delegation, Mr. President, the best of luck in fulfilling its duties. We pay tribute to the Dominican Republic for its leadership in its first-ever virtual presidency of the Council in the month of April. The current and prolonged circumstances give this debate on working methods a higher significance.

Lebanon thanks the briefers for their insights. Let us express our support to Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in her capacity as the new Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions.

The informal retreat on the working methods of the Security Council, organized by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the State of Kuwait in January of this year, was a much welcome initiative. It offered interesting ideas and food for thought in helping to improve the working methods of the Security Council. We also commend both countries for providing a summary of the discussions held at this retreat, which ultimately enables the wider membership and other stakeholders to reflect on the discussions.

As rightly highlighted in the concept note (S/2020/374, annex), transparency and efficiency should go hand in hand, *a fortiori* under these extraordinary circumstances. It is important to acknowledge the important work done by the Security Council members and the Secretariat to rapidly adapt the work of the Council to this unforeseen situation, while trying to uphold some of the key principles steering their activities.

The Council has been able to adapt its work essentially through improved technology platforms, namely, video-teleconference, which offers the opportunity to widen the net of people who are invited from outside to brief the Council. Online meetings have made it possible to continue the functioning of the Council and the Organization. The Council could consider developing specific working methods for the virtual work of the Security Council on the basis of the three letters contained in documents S/2020/372 of 7 May 2020, S/2020/253 of 27 March 2020 and S/2020/273 of 2 April 2020.

Still, it must be understood that it cannot permanently replace in-person meetings, and these should apply only during extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances. One of the concerns we express is that multilingualism — a cornerstone of the work of our Organization — has not been fully guaranteed, through interpretation, for instance, or the timely translation of documents.

The Council can improve the efficiency of its work by enhancing meaningful communication and the involvement of concerned countries in the decision-making process. This type of involvement is conducive to better and fairer implementation of Security Council resolutions, thereby improving the efficiency of the Council. We continue to call for a more analytical content of the Security Council report to the General Assembly, and to improve its timeliness.

On the prevention front, we believe that more visiting missions of the Council could take place, with the possibility of having a particular outcome. In this transitional period, improved and continued communication between the Security Council and the wider membership remains necessary to keep us from creating a virtual wall.

Annex 35

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the United Nations, Christian Wenaweser

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate, which could not be more timely given the challenges that the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic creates for the Council's working methods. Liechtenstein appreciates the Council's efforts to ensure business continuity, notably the work of the Dominican Republic last month, continued by your delegation this month. The Arria Formula meeting marking 75 years since the end of the Second World War on European soil was a welcome example of creative working methods, demonstrating how online technologies can bring together a record number of high-level participants, and proving that these challenging times can be used for innovation and lasting positive change.

Liechtenstein's broad priorities for improved Council working methods remain the same as the Council adapts to new circumstances. Liechtenstein expects to see at least the same standards of transparency and inclusion applied. The Council should agree on a mechanism to allow its video-teleconference meetings to be entered into its official records so that its public deliberations are not lost to history, and on a streamlined voting mechanism to enhance its efficiency. While it is good to see initial progress on restarting the work of some of the Council's subsidiary bodies, they all should become fully operational as soon as possible. The commitment of some Council members to continuing to brief the broader membership on its deliberations, as well as the holding of wrap-up sessions and briefings on the programme of work, are particularly important during this time. The interactivity of wrap-up sessions could be enhanced by inviting questions to be submitted in advance by the membership, as took place with this month's briefing on the programme of work, and result in opening remarks that address the questions of the membership rather than offering an overview of the past month.

With regard to inclusion, the Council should build on the progress demonstrated in the aforementioned Arria Formula meeting to open it to the increased participation of civil society briefers. Emphasis should be given to hearing from those who may have difficulty accessing the Council during normal times, in particular women, young people, persons with disabilities and indigenous persons. This is just one way that the Council can build back better. Unfortunately, the present pandemic is unlikely to be the last time that the Council is faced with the need to resort to virtual meetings. Forging consensus on inclusive and transparent working methods now will help to ensure the future resilience of its work.

The Council's response to COVID-19 is also an opportunity to consider broader questions. Chief among these is the need to take on a perspective of peace and security that is human-centred. The prevailing notion of peace and security in the Council implies the need to ensure hard security, through an often heavily militarized response. This approach, while a necessary element of peace and security, leaves many of the largest causes of insecurity around the world unaddressed. It is evident that there has never been a time when more people have felt insecure than during the current pandemic. Our warming climate and rising sea levels threaten to destroy the livelihoods and wash away the homes of millions. The international wildlife trade is a proven threat to public health and human security. Human rights violations continue to create mass insecurity among the world's most marginalized people. The key lesson for the Council is this: addressing human security is no less important to the maintenance of international peace and security than preventing and ending the outbreak of armed conflict, and both are intimately linked. Yet the Council is certainly less prepared to deal with that fundamental dimension of security. The

Council's inability to find consensus on a resolution addressing the pandemic is the most obvious proof of that.

Liechtenstein commends the work of Kuwait in leading the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, applauds its success in forging consensus on many important amendments to presidential note S/2017/507, and welcomes the resolve of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to take this vital work forward. One area that requires continued consideration is the extension of the Ombudsperson mechanism, with the aim of ensuring due process in the work of all the Council's sanctions bodies. Finalizing the outstanding note on penholdership should also be urgently addressed so that the responsibility for drafting products can be more equally shared between the permanent five and the elected ten. The question of penholdership is also one expression of a wider need for the Council to facilitate the participation of its elected members on an equal footing with the Council's permanent members. Their role has significantly increased in the past months, and Liechtenstein welcomes that trend.

The veto continues to prevent the Council from adopting resolutions on key topics, not least with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic. Delays inherent in the Council's written voting procedure give even more weight to the use or threat of use of the veto, and consequently discourage Council debate on politically sensitive issues, thereby reducing its effectiveness. Liechtenstein remains convinced that the use of a veto should automatically result in the convening of the General Assembly to discuss the matter. Such a discussion would take place without prejudice to any possible outcome and irrespective of the substance of the draft resolution subject to a veto. Liechtenstein will resume activities in that respect as soon as the circumstances allow. In addition, Liechtenstein encourages all States, in particular those running for a seat on the Council, to sign the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group code of conduct, now supported by 121 States, including two-thirds of the current Security Council membership, for timely and decisive Security Council action to prevent and end mass atrocity crimes. Preventing such crimes remains a core duty of the Security Council, on which it, however, consistently fails to deliver.

Annex 36

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, Syed Mohamad Hasrin Aidid

I thank you, Sir, for convening today's timely and important debate, both in your capacity as President of the Council and Vice-Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions. Malaysia would also like to commend Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for its leadership and commitment on this issue as Chair of the Informal Working Group.

Malaysia also wishes to applaud the constant efforts of the Council in exploring practical working methods during these unprecedented circumstances. This clearly illustrates the importance of ensuring that the Security Council is as agile and effective as possible in discharging its mandates on behalf of the wider United Nations membership.

The Council's performance, credibility and accountability are hugely defined by its working methods. In that regard, my delegation wishes to highlight the following points.

First, on transparency and inclusiveness. Malaysia is pleased to see that progress has been made in enhancing the transparency and accountability of the work of the Council. We note that there are increasing numbers of open debates, with selected meetings covered by live webcast. The greater use of Arria Formula meetings of the Council for engagement with the wider United Nations membership is also commendable. In addition, we commend the conduct of informal briefings, as well as the introductory and wrap-up sessions by the President of the Security Council.

We are also encouraged by the continuous monthly engagement between the President of the Security Council and the President of the General Assembly. The readout of this engagement, which is circulated by the President of the General Assembly, is valuable to all Member States. Malaysia hopes that similar engagement could be strengthened with the President of the Economic and Social Council, as peace and security issues are also linked to the subject of women, youth and development.

Notwithstanding that, we also call on the Council to produce a summary of the closed consultations. We believe that it would be useful if some form of summary records on the important discussions could be established and shared with the broader membership.

With regard to the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, we note a trend in the delay of its submission in recent years. Malaysia also notes that, as of today, only seven Council members have circulated their monthly assessments for 2019. We would expect the Council to fulfil its commitment regarding the timely submission of reports, as stipulated in its presidential note S/2019/997 of December 2019.

Secondly, with regard to effectiveness, the Council must fully utilize the "Any other business" item to ensure emerging threats and issues are addressed swiftly. It should also request more early warning and situational awareness briefings from the Secretariat. The Council should also continue to invite briefers who could deliver insights to add value to its deliberations. More importantly, the Council must do its best in closing the gap between early warning and early action.

This relates to my final point, which is on the decision-making process. The Council must act promptly, decisively and in unison in maintaining international peace and security. Too often, due to the current veto system, the Council has failed in its mandate, owing to the narrow interests of some members. As a signatory of

the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency code of conduct, Malaysia calls for restraint in the use or the threat of the veto in situations involving mass atrocity crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. We also support the French-Mexican initiative on framing the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities. In today's context, Malaysia believes that it is also apposite to regulate the use of the veto in addressing non-traditional threats to international peace and security, such as on issues concerning global public-health emergencies.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations offers a golden opportunity for the Council to strengthen and reinvigorate its working methods so as to address the integrated nature of today's security threats. The Charter of the United Nations, indeed, affords the Council the flexibility to evolve and adapt as necessary. In this regard, Malaysia will continue to provide its full support towards the achievement of that goal.

Annex 37

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations

On behalf of the Government of Malta, I would like to thank Estonia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for organizing this exchange. Malta welcomes this debate and remains convinced that the Security Council has a central role to play in ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security in today's world.

The world is constantly facing new challenges, some of which, like the coronavirus disease pandemic we are currently experiencing, are completely unforeseen. It is therefore important that the Council remain vigilant and ready to respond to new challenges in a united and decisive manner. Unfortunately, while most of the time the Council works in unison, there are instances where geopolitical interests get in the way, hindering its effectiveness, efficiency and credibility.

Malta welcomes the fact that the Council has found a way to quickly adapt to the current situation and managed to reinvent the way it works in just a few weeks. We understand that this was no easy task, but welcome the fact that a solution has been found and that the Council's work has continued smoothly. In this context, we also thank Council members for making current meetings as open and transparent as possible and for keeping the wider membership and the general public informed about its work.

In recent years, the Security Council has taken several steps to increase its transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. It now holds more public meetings and gives the opportunity to non-Council member States to speak before it. The inclusion of civil society and non-governmental organizations in Council meetings is most welcome, and Malta fully supports that approach. Such briefings provide us with important insights into the actual situation on the ground and allow us to better understand the struggles that civilians and the most vulnerable sectors of society face in times of conflict.

The notion of accountability is also of key importance. In order to ensure a just and lasting peace, perpetrators of war crimes must be brought to justice. This is the only way victims can heal and societies move forward. Against this backdrop, Malta reiterates its support for the Franco-Mexican initiative on the use of the veto in cases of atrocities.

We are pleased to note that, over recent months, the Security Council has continued to work towards strengthening justice and accountability. It is just over a year since the Security Council adopted a landmark resolution on conflict-related sexual violence. Resolution 2467 (2019) represents a powerful new instrument in the ongoing fight to eradicate these heinous crimes, and significantly strengthening prevention through justice and affirming accountability. Moreover, through this resolution, for the very first time it was formally acknowledged that a survivor-centred approach must guide every aspect of the response of affected countries and the international community. We hope that similar initiatives continue to be brought to the table.

In conclusion, Malta once again calls for cooperation among all States and reinforces the need to maintain and continue strengthening these three pillars: transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. The work of the Security Council affects all countries, and collective action in the interest of the common good should be its guiding light.

Annex 38**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

Mexico thanks Estonia for the invitation to contribute to this debate on the working methods of the Security Council, which is being held at a historic moment for humankind and, therefore, the United Nations. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic represents one of the greatest challenges our Organization has ever faced and is testing its effectiveness — so much so that the topic before us, which has regrettably been treated as a matter of procedure, has now assumed vital importance.

We appreciate the measures adopted under the presidencies of China, the Dominican Republic and Estonia to adapt the working methods of the Security Council to the new circumstances imposed by the pandemic and thereby largely maintain the Council's level of effectiveness, efficiency and transparency. We hope that the lessons learned will drive future discussions on the changes required to working methods.

However, 75 years after the founding of the United Nations, and despite the profound transformations the international community has undergone, the Security Council has failed to make progress on an issue crucial to the fulfilment of its mandate. There has been little progress in restricting the use of a prerogative set out in the Charter, which has allowed the Council to stand idly by while mass atrocities and war crimes are committed. Today we are again witnessing the Council's inability to take a clear position on a crisis that is paralysing our peoples and our economies and calls into question our very way of life.

The outdated working methods of the Security Council are no excuse for its failure to meet the responsibility entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations. The Council has not only a legal but a moral obligation to act on behalf of the entire international community against threats to international peace and security.

Among the changes we view as necessary, Mexico supports all initiatives aimed at restricting the use of the veto, reiterating that this prerogative is a responsibility and not a right. In this regard, the initiative promoted by Mexico and France, whereby the five permanent members would voluntarily commit to refraining from using the veto in mass-atrocity cases, is intended precisely to ensure that the Council can comply with its obligations. We are encouraged that 105 States — more than half of the membership — have supported this proposal.

We also support initiatives seeking to ensure greater accountability to the General Assembly when the veto is used. We stress the importance that the Council's annual reports to the General Assembly be submitted on time and, above all, contain analytical information on its deliberations.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, we acknowledge the progress made by the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Matters, which, under the chairmanship of Kuwait over the past two years, led to the adoption of several presidential notes, including one on the participation of the newly elected members of the Security Council. As a candidate for the Security Council for the 2021-2022 term, Mexico is of the view that the measures contained in that note will help ensure future members are best prepared. We firmly believe that, under the very capable leadership of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Working Group will be able to continue making progress on other issues, including improving the distribution of penholderships for Council resolutions. Tasks and responsibilities should be distributed more equitably among all Council members.

Likewise, we reiterate the need for greater transparency when it comes to reports addressed to the Security Council invoking self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter. Notifying the Council of such actions is an obligation, and it is in the interests of the entire membership to so informed, especially with respect to the use of force. Mexico has formally submitted a proposal for the consideration of this matter to the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization. However, this does not replace the need for greater transparency and effectiveness on the part of the Council. This issue is becoming even more relevant in the light of the recent increase in invocations of Article 51 relating to actions against non-State actors, in particular terrorists in a third State. The Council must ensure that the lawful order established by the Charter of the United Nations is upheld at all times.

The current situation calls on us to break with inertia and inaction. The United Nations must reclaim its role in saving future generations from untold suffering, and to do so it is absolutely crucial that the Security Council rise to the occasion.

Annex 39**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations, Omar Hilale**

I would like to thank Mr. Sven Jürgenson, Permanent Representative of Estonia, the President of the Security Council for the month of May, for convening this open video-teleconference on the topic “Ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council”, and for the compilation of the statements by Member States.

I also thank Ms. Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, for her briefing in her capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, and wish her all the best in discharging that responsibility.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of my delegation for the dedicated, intensive and successful work led by Kuwait, as former Chair of the Informal Working Group. In that regard, we commend the efforts of the Informal Working Group to enhance the transparency of its work.

In addition, we thank Ms. Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report, for her briefing.

We appreciate the convening of this open debate, which is aimed at giving an opportunity to all Member States to provide practical proposals that can contribute to enhancing the transparency and efficiency of the Council, which is entrusted, pursuant the Charter of the United Nations, with responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

The current situation caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic has radically changed the way the world now works. For the first time in a long while, all nations are facing the same challenge. We can take this opportunity to bring nations together and prevent further conflict.

We welcome and greatly appreciate the measures taken by the members of the Security Council to adapt its working methods in order to ensure the continuity of its work during this pandemic. Morocco would like to raise the following points in contributing to today's debate on working methods.

Morocco believes that the note by the President S/2017/507 is a valuable tool for increasing the Council's transparency, inclusiveness and efficiency. It provides us a balanced, coherent and substantive document for reflection, which can serve as a useful guide on agreed measures or best practices in relation to its working methods.

Articles 24, 25 and 26 of the Charter of the United Nations provide the Security Council with important powers and prerogatives, which it cannot exercise without adopting an effective and efficient approach. The Council must, in particular, support the development of its working methods by ensuring the proper implementation of its mandate. Needless to say, such methods concern all States Members of the United Nations, including both permanent and non-permanent members of the Council.

The number of public meetings has increased steadily since 2013. The webcasting of meetings and media interactions have given greater visibility to the Council's work. More information is also now available through the United Nations website, as well as social media. Morocco stresses the importance of regularly holding open debates on the working methods of the Council, as continued discussion of this issue is of interest to all Member States that wish to see the Council working in the best way possible.

There is no doubt that the pandemic has forced us all to work remotely, but prove that we can manage meetings using the new technologies, notably video-teleconference technology, allowing to the Security Council to continue functioning effectively during extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances. In this context, we should underline that the process of improving the Council's working methods is an open-ended, evolving and, above all, ongoing process that can contribute to enhancing the transparency and quality of the work of the Council, and also allows the Council to benefit from the diversity of positions and views among Member States.

The Kingdom of Morocco, as a troop-contributing country, can attest to the lasting repercussions of the Security Council's efforts in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and the peaceful settlement of disputes, in particular on our continent of Africa.

Morocco also attaches great importance to the development of preventive diplomacy, in line with the requirements for rapid and effective action to maintain international peace and security, the promotion of political solutions to conflicts, and support on the part of the international community for measures taken by the Security Council.

Finally, we should not lose sight of the fact that discussions on improving the working methods of the Security Council are part of an overall vision for the reform of the United Nations architecture.

The Kingdom of Morocco acknowledges the tangible efforts made in recent years and welcomes the positive developments in improving the functioning of the Council and enhancing its effectiveness and inclusiveness. We reiterate our commitment and willingness, particularly in these special circumstances, to continue to contribute to this important work on the improvement of the Council's working methods.

Annex 40**Statement by the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations, Craig John Hawke**

I am honoured to submit this statement on behalf of the following 24 countries that had the privilege to serve as elected Security Council members in recent years, from 2011 to 2019: Angola, Australia, Bolivia, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lithuania, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Rwanda, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Spain, Sweden and Uruguay.

We welcome the progress made in recent years, including in the context of the work of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions. We express our full support to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in its capacity as current Chair of the Group.

Elected members continue to have a particular interest in the working methods of the Security Council. Getting them right is essential to the work of this body. It goes to the heart of its performance and accountability to the broader United Nations membership and to the Charter of the United Nations. Good working methods, big and small, help create an environment enabling each and every Council member to be fully involved, to contribute to informed discussions and to play a full and meaningful role in the Council's work. This becomes even more important when there is disunity in the Council on an issue and seemingly no space for a political solution.

In line with the concept note for this discussion (S/2020/374, annex), we offer the following observations and proposals with respect to the interlinked and mutually reinforcing elements of transparency, efficiency and effectiveness.

With respect to transparency, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has starkly illustrated how important transparency is to the Council's legitimacy. While we recognize COVID-19's unprecedented challenges to how the Council normally operates and also recognize that sometimes the Council needs to have frank exchanges on sensitive issues away from the public eye, the Council must find ways to be visible to maintain public confidence. We encourage the Council to continue active discussions and efforts to adapt its working methods to these extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances in a transparent and efficient manner.

We call for all Council meetings to be included in *The Journal of the United Nations*. We also encourage the continued publication of the President's addendum in addition to the Council's monthly programme of work. Between start-of-presidency briefings and wrap-up sessions, we encourage Council members to consider other ways throughout the month to keep the membership updated on the Council's work and products under consideration. We welcome all extra efforts being made to agree public remarks following meetings. We encourage this to become normal practice.

Where there is no agreement on public remarks, Council Presidents should be empowered to address the media, in a manner respectful to other colleagues. All Council members are encouraged to participate actively in wrap-up sessions and should strive to be as candid as possible. Organizers should seek questions ahead of time in order to better shape discussions.

Concerning efficiency, Council members should reflect on, and have a frank discussion about, the ever-increasing workload and proliferation of meetings. While noting the importance of keeping attention on situations on the Council's agenda, the Council should be prepared to innovate and adapt to ensure that it is making the best use of its time.

The chairing of subsidiary bodies should be the shared responsibility of all 15 members. Briefers should continue to be encouraged to provide focused remarks and to use maps and graphics as appropriate, to better support discussions. Council members should continue to think creatively about tailoring the format and focus of meetings to secure the best chance of a meaningful outcome from the Council's deliberations. Members should also reflect on the experience of working remotely and any efficiencies that could continue to be employed during normal operations.

With regard to effectiveness, the Council should have a fair and equitable division of labour for penholdership so that members are not precluded from offering their insights and ideas. This spirit should also apply to negotiations on products. The Chairs of subsidiary bodies should be closely consulted with and involved in the deliberations on, and drafting and preparation of, relevant Council outcomes and initiatives related to the committees they chair, given the expertise and knowledge accumulated, including through their periodic travels to regions applicable to their work.

The veto may not strictly be a working method, but it has a significant negative impact, or cascade effect, on the working methods of the Council, including where elected members are routinely excluded for no reason other than habit.

When the Council does agree outcomes, it should revisit these and hold itself accountable rather than waiting until its next regularly scheduled deliberations. Council members should select briefers who can deliver insights to add value to the Council's deliberations. Civil-society representatives, notably female briefers, should be invited regularly to share experiences, including from the field.

Council members should continue to think innovatively about ways to engage with affected countries. Council members should also continue to create informal spaces for more meaningful discussions focused on identifying collective approaches and solutions.

Council members should promote more interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), an advisory body to the Security Council, taking into account the fact that the PBC plays an important role in preventing the recurrence of conflict. Members should make better and more frequent use of situational awareness briefings, and they should also make requests under the agenda item "Any other business" to ensure that emerging threats are addressed with the right timing.

The Council must live up to its own undertakings as agreed in presidential note S/2017/507. This must be matched by cultural change and the courage to do things differently and exercise the powers conferred under the Charter. COVID-19 presents a unique opportunity to look critically at the way in which the Council works with a view to improving transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. Members have our full support.

Annex 41

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, Samson Itegboje

Let me, at the outset, thank Ambassador Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, for having convened this important open video-teleconference debate on ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council. I also extend our thanks to other briefers for their insightful contributions. Good working methods are not only essential to the work of the Council but also go to the heart of its performance. We therefore offer the following proposals.

The Council should adapt its working methods to ensure its transparent, efficient and accountable functioning, in the light of the anticipated increase in its membership. It should also adapt them with respect to its subsidiary bodies and ensure the full participation of all members of the Security Council in its work, including the holding of the presidency of the enlarged Council by non-permanent members at least once during their tenure.

It should also refrain from using Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations for issues that do not pose a threat to international peace and security and avoid any recourse to the imposition or prolongation of sanctions on any State, which serves the interest of only one or several States, as against the general interest of the international community.

The working methods of the Council should also be tailored in such a way as to ensure that the conflicts on its agenda, as well as emerging threats, are addressed within their time frames and at meetings designed, in terms of format and focus, in order to bring about the best chance of a meaningful outcome from the Council's deliberations.

Furthermore, the Council needs to improve its informal consultations. Meetings are not the primary aspect of the Council's modus operandi; rather, meeting behind closed doors provides the opportunity for Council members to engage informally with the aim of achieving concrete results.

Other measures that my delegation believes can be taken to further enhance transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council in achieving its objectives include the following.

First, there is a need for the submission of an analytical and comprehensive evaluation of the Council's substantive work in its annual report to the General Assembly.

Secondly, there should be an increase in the number of interactive briefings, informal interactive dialogues and Arria Formula meetings as well as other public meetings.

Thirdly, permanent and elected members could serve as Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and have an equal say in the selection of those Chairs in accordance with presidential note S/2017/507, which stresses that any member may be a penholder, in keeping with our collective accountability for the maintenance of international peace and security. In other words, there should be burden-sharing and a more equal distribution of work among all members of the Council to enhance its effectiveness.

Fourthly, consultations and cooperation should be expanded to non-Council-member States, particularly troop-contributing countries and police-contributing countries, as well as regional organizations.

Fifthly, the Council should hold more wrap-up sessions to improve the flow of substantive information and understanding of the Council's positions within the wider membership.

Sixthly, Council members should also strive to promote more interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission and regional organizations that play important roles in conflict prevention and management.

Before I conclude, I wish to note that the coronavirus disease pandemic has effectively exposed the underbelly of the Security Council and brought to the fore the need for the total reform of the Council, a Council whose membership, both permanent and non-permanent, is reflective of all geographical zones of the world — a truly democratized and inclusive Security Council that is functional, fit for purpose and ready to take on the global challenges of the twenty-first century.

Nigeria, like most Member States, will continue to support, and spare no effort in advocating for, a meaningful reform that will not only make the Security Council more relevant, transparent, efficient and effective in addressing present and emerging global challenges, but also promote the core principles of the United Nations Charter.

Annex 42**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations**

This statement is being issued on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden — on the occasion of the Security Council's consideration of the implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council S/2017/507 and the working methods of the Council.

The Nordic countries welcome the decision of the Estonian presidency to invite briefings by the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions; Professor Edward Luck; and the representative of Security Council Report. Security Council Report is an invaluable resource for Member States, civil society and the general public alike. It provides indispensable research and insight into the everyday work of the Council and the important topics on its agenda, and we welcome its participation.

This year's discussion of the Council's working methods comes at an unprecedented moment. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has caused people the world over to adapt to working remotely, including, remarkably, the Security Council. This shift in the way in which the Council conducts its business has underscored the importance of its methods of work and put to the test its ability to uphold the principles not only of transparency, efficiency and effectiveness but also of accountability and inclusivity. The Nordic countries firmly believe that these principles are mutually reinforcing and cannot be put aside for sake of expediency or convenience. In times of crisis, they are more important than ever to ensure the continued legitimacy of the Council.

We therefore commend the efforts of the successive presidencies since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis to facilitate the continuation of the work of the Council under these exceptional circumstances. In particular, we welcome the Dominican Republic's efforts to provide much-needed transparency, including through facilitating the inclusion of non-members' inputs in the written records of open-format video-teleconferences.

We also commend the Estonian presidency for further advancing these efforts by adopting new and innovative digital solutions to make the open meetings publicly accessible, enabling better inclusion of women and civil-society organizations in the Council's briefings and allowing for all Member States to deliver statements in the Arria Format. The Nordic countries also welcome the common guidance on working methods for the Council presidencies of Estonia, France and Germany.

While important steps in the right direction have been made, the situation remains less than ideal. We note with concern that these meetings are not considered to be official meetings of the Council.

We believe that the Informal Working Group should play a role in conducting a lessons-learned exercise once the current crisis subsides so as to establish best practice and ensure that the Council is well equipped should it face another situation where in-person meetings become impossible.

The annual "Hitting the ground running" retreat, hosted by Finland in cooperation with Security Council Report and Professor Luck of Columbia University for the Council and the newly elected members, has become an important forum for informal discussions concerning Council's working methods. It further offers an opportunity to exchange views on the best practices adopted during the current pandemic that could become established procedures in future.

On working methods more broadly, we recall the fundamental principle that Article 24 of the Charter enshrines the Council's responsibility to act on behalf of the entire United Nations membership. For us, that means that the Council has a responsibility to undertake broad engagement and consultation with non-members, particularly concerned States. The Council needs to talk with countries, not only about them.

Interaction with the broader membership should be improved and enhanced in all aspects. In that respect, we welcome the presidential note on wrap-up sessions (S/2019/994) adopted last year. We find these sessions to be a very valuable resource and an important opportunity for dialogue.

The Council must ensure the transparency and accessibility of its work to all. These principles are what inspired Norway, together with Security Council Report, to publish *The United Nations Security Council Handbook: A User's Guide to Practice and Procedure* last year. We hope that this guide will provide a useful look at the working methods and decision-making of the Council.

Both permanent and elected members share the Charter obligation to maintain international peace and security. All members should therefore also have equal opportunities to shoulder the work of the Council. We welcome the prominent role that elected members have played in improving the working methods of the Council over the years, but more needs to be done to ensure a balanced division of labour. We welcome the ongoing work in the Council towards agreement on a presidential note on penholdership arrangements.

The Nordic countries encourage the full implementation of the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group by all Council members, and calls upon the permanent members to not vote against any credible draft resolution before the Security Council on timely and decisive action to end atrocity crimes.

We hope also that greater strides can be made this year to improve the timeliness and the analysis of the Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly, especially ahead of the new presidential note on the annual report, due to take effect next year. In that respect, we also continue to urge each presidency to submit their monthly assessments for inclusion in the annual report and to consider other ways of circulation when consensus is not possible. We find those assessments particularly valuable in providing context and complementing the information presented in the report's introduction.

We also call on the Council to also further strengthen its relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Nordic countries also wish to underline that the Council must continue to be open to the voices of civil society, including women, who can provide expert views and first-hand experience on the issues on the Council's agenda. The practice of inviting civil society and United Nations briefers should be maintained throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, especially since the situation in relevant countries may change profoundly and rapidly.

The Nordic countries would also like to emphasize that the Ombudsperson mechanism as a key element in the preservation of the integrity, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of targeted United Nations terrorism-related sanctions. The Office of the Ombudsperson provides important due process guarantees, and we recommend that the necessary arrangements are made to ensure its continued ability to carry out its mandate independently and effectively.

Global cooperation is needed now more than ever. It is therefore only natural for the world to look to the United Nations and the Security Council to set the tone and direction for both a response to and recovery from the enormous challenge we all face. An integral part of a relevant and strong United Nations is an efficient, transparent and inclusive Security Council.

Annex 43

Statement by the Chargé d' Affaires, a.i. and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, Kira Christianne D. Azucena

We thank the Permanent Mission of Estonia for convening this meeting on ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council. We appreciate the briefings provided by Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, and by Ms. Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report.

As new developments and threats emerge, the Council's work continues to grow, demanding its attention, resources and energy. It is therefore timely to review its working methods to ensure that they adjust to both substantive and administrative developments. The Philippines welcomes the progress made by the Informal Working Group towards improving the working methods of the Security Council. We are particularly pleased by the comprehensive compilation of these measures, facilitated under Japan's 2017 chairmanship, to enhance its efficiency, transparency and interactivity.

I would like to focus on three areas: greater participation and transparency, improvement in the Council's working methods and its positive impact on the Council's efficiency and effectiveness, and agility and consensus-building.

We welcome the increase in public Council meetings, which we believe is contributing to greater transparency and accountability. The increased participation of non-members sends the important message that the Council recognizes their contribution and promotes inclusiveness, which puts unilateralism in check. We therefore support the holding of as many meetings as possible in a public format. Our delegation also highlights the importance of adapting the working methods of the Council's subsidiary bodies, with an emphasis on greater transparency, consistency and clarity, and of the periodic review of such methods.

Given the vital role of groups and regional organizations in dealing with matters of international peace and security, my delegation believes that they should be allowed greater participation in the Council's decision-making processes. In that regard, we welcome the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Secretary-General's first-ever briefing to the Security Council in January (see S/PV.8711) to highlight the Association's role in the maintenance of regional peace and security.

While conflict prevention remains primarily a State responsibility, the Philippines endorses the intent of resolution 2171 (2014), which stresses the important role of women and civil society in that regard. It is important to further enhance the participation of women and civil society in discussions on the prevention and resolution of conflict, the maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peacebuilding.

While bearing in mind the need to address cross-cutting issues, the Council's working methods must promote a clear focus on its core mandate — promoting and maintaining international peace and security. That focus would facilitate improved, effective and efficient working methods.

Improving its working methods is an important component of comprehensive and timely Security Council reform, which should lead to the expansion of the Council and the concomitant review of certain working methods. In addition, the issue of the veto is intrinsically connected to that of the working methods. We reiterate the view

that veto power has no place in a twenty-first-century Security Council, but in the interim, gradual steps may be taken to minimize its use.

We believe that the Council's working methods ought not be decided by the Council alone. The wider membership must be able to take part in the process — not just in a token or perfunctory manner, but in a meaningful way. That is in line with Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations, which states that the Security Council acts on behalf of the wider membership in carrying out its duties.

With regard to peacekeeping in particular, mechanisms like the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, which guarantees open, active and transparent dialogue between the Missions of troop- and police-contributing countries and the Security Council, should be maintained and strengthened.

The Philippines recognizes the extraordinary circumstances and unprecedented challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is indeed necessary for the Security Council to nurture its agility by maintaining a state of readiness to meet and make decisions during unique situations while ensuring effectiveness, efficiency and transparency.

During the pandemic, we saw how the Council — for the first time in history — held video-teleconferences (VTCs) and voted in written procedures. However, new ways of doing things, such as the use of VTCs in lieu of in-person meetings and modified voting procedures, can pose a significant challenge to ensuring the inclusiveness and transparency of the Council's work, because it takes away the core nature of negotiations and consultations, whereby delegations can immediately clarify their respective national positions and appreciate each other's views. Such earnest negotiations, conducted in good faith and in a face-to-face setting, represent the central tenets of multilateralism, which promotes the building of consensus around a shared vision or goal. We should always promote and nurture that spirit.

We should make full use of technology and systems, as well as build mutual trust, if we are to ensure agility in the Council's work. We should invest in the development of appropriate and secure technologies — both hardware and software — to further our goals. During normal times, we should always anticipate and pave the way for new platforms, work modes and arrangements to provide us with fast, efficient and secure tools during extraordinary times.

The Philippines reiterates its commitment to preserving the principles of transparency, efficiency and effectiveness even as we go through this extraordinary crisis. The Philippines stands ready to cooperate with and support the Security Council in finding the optimal way to ensure that our working methods promote the important principles of multilateralism and diplomacy, on which the United Nations was built.

Annex 44
Statement by the Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations, Joanna Wronecka

I thank Estonia for convening today's important meeting, and I thank the briefers for their insightful remarks and their valuable contributions to the core issues. Highlighting the need to ensure the Council's transparency, efficiency and effectiveness is more urgent than ever during these unprecedented circumstances of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the challenges the Council now faces as a result. We welcome that initiative and hope that the Council will take up the concrete proposals put forward today.

The upcoming seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations is an opportune moment to not only reflect but also act to improve the functioning of the United Nations system, including its Security Council. Given Poland's experience as a non-permanent Council member and Vice-Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, complemented by my recent experience co-chairing the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation and increase in Council membership and other Council-related matters, let me offer a few relevant ideas of what could be done.

First, we must ensure the continuous, transparent, effective, efficient and agile functioning of the Security Council — both during ordinary and exceptional circumstances like today — in line with the Charter of the United Nations, including Article 24, paragraph 1, and Article 28, paragraph 1, the Council's provisional rules of procedure, presidential notes on its working methods and other relevant documents and practices.

We recognize the unprecedented nature of the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, which occurred during China's presidency of the Council. This rendered physical meetings at the United Nations Headquarters impracticable for the daily work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies. We welcome the initiatives and decisions to adapt the Council's working methods to these extraordinary circumstances, including the agreement on procedures for adopting resolutions and presidential statements. We also appreciate the issuance — during the Council presidencies of the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France and Germany — of guides on working methods, and welcome the role of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in encouraging them to do so. We hope that subsequent presidencies will follow those good practices and take into account the lessons learned.

At the same time, we support and encourage further adjustment of the working methods of the Council, including its subsidiary bodies, in order to provide it sufficient flexibility to function continuously in a transparent, efficient, effective and inclusive way and to ensure that it is accountable to the wider United Nations membership. To that end, in addition to the observations and proposals offered in the statement on behalf of the States that served as elected Council members from 2011 to 2019, we encourage considering open debates held through video-teleconference to be official meetings. Moreover, we advocate employing creative and innovative approaches to promote the transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, inclusiveness and accountability of the Council. I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Estonia's presidency in particular for implementing its excellent ideas and solutions, including its cutting-edge technological ones.

Secondly, we must build and follow-up on the work done in the Informal Working Group, including under the recent dedicated and successful chairmanships of Japan and Kuwait. The full implementation of the latest comprehensive presidential note (S/2017/507) and the notes related to the Council working methods adopted

since then remains vital. However, that should not be the only goal. Rather, it should be complemented by continued progress on a number of issues, including fair and clear procedures related to Council sanctions regimes, as well as co-penholdership.

Therefore, the exceptional circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic notwithstanding, we encourage further efforts to improve the Council's functioning. We hope that the current and future elected members of the Council will remain united and continue that endeavour. We look forward to the future successes of the Informal Working Group, under the presidency of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and of initiatives outside of it, in steadily advancing the Council's working methods.

In conclusion, I would once again like to thank Estonia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for convening today's debate, and all who contributed to the improvement of the Council's working methods, which are critical to its functioning. Let me reiterate Poland's support for further increasing the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's work and strengthening its ability to respond to current and emerging crises. Guided by the Charter of the United Nations and the values of solidarity, responsibility and commitment, we encourage all initiatives aimed at improving the Security Council's performance.

Annex 45

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, Cho Hyun

My delegation commends the President's initiative in convening today's very important open video-teleconference of the Security Council on "Ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council." My delegation would also like to express its appreciation to Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, and Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report, for their informative briefings today.

Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations emphasizes that the Council should act promptly, effectively and on behalf of the wider membership. That is why its working methods are so important and relevant. As such, my delegation especially welcomes the holding of today's open video-teleconference, with the participation of non-Council member countries. We believe that this, in itself, is a testament to the Council's commitment to continuing to promote transparency and efficiency, while holding itself accountable to the wider membership. We hope that, moving forward, the Council will continue to spare no effort in that regard.

In the presidency's concept note (S/2020/374, annex), Estonia invites Member States to consider concrete proposals on improving transparency and efficiency and on ensuring that the Security Council acts on behalf of the wider United Nations membership. To that end, I now have the honour to highlight the following points.

First, my delegation expresses its concern that exercising or threatening to exercise the veto power is repeatedly causing stalemates within the Security Council. We therefore hope that the Council will be able to engage in more serious discussions to limit the use of the veto. At the intergovernmental negotiation meetings on Security Council reform, we hear increasingly widespread and strong opinions on the need to abolish the right of veto, which has proven to be one of the main obstacles to the Council's actions and deliberations. At the least, we believe that there should not be any expansion of the right of veto in the future Security Council reform process.

Secondly, we support efforts aimed at improving the Council's working methods so as to allow the permanent and elected members to work on as equal a footing as possible. Coordination and joint action among the elected members can be useful tools in overcoming stalemates, fostering the participation of civil society and shining a spotlight on cross-cutting issues. In this regard, we support calls for the fair distribution of work, including penholderships and subsidiary body chairpersonships, among both permanent and elected members. Moreover, we call on the Council to find ways to help improve the preparation of newly elected members that would enable them to hit the ground running upon assuming their seats.

Thirdly, we encourage the Council to have more frequent, substantial and systematic engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). Based on our recent experience serving as Chair of the PBC in 2017 and Vice-Chair in 2018, we are of the view that the PBC plays an important and unique bridging role between the Security Council and other organs of the United Nations. The PBC is also well-positioned to help mobilize a wide range of relevant stakeholders with a view to sustaining peace from a longer-term perspective, encompassing the full peace continuum and providing advice to the Council for its due consideration.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has affected the functioning of the Security Council in various ways, and this gives us much food for thought as we collectively

contemplate ways to improve the Council's working methods. We believe that it should be a process that does not rush to conclusions, considering the sustained impact this pandemic will have on how the Council operates in future. My delegation commends the efforts made by Council members to keep the Council working during the past few months despite not being able to physically meet. We hope that the Council will be able to further strengthen its agility by agreeing on additional ways to improve its working methods under extraordinary circumstances, such as record-keeping, the participation of non-Council members and the formal announcement of meetings.

My delegation believes that it is critically important that we continue our efforts towards Security Council reform to ensure that the Council becomes more democratic, effective, representative, transparent and accountable. Improving the working methods of the Council is an integral part of this endeavour. The Republic of Korea, in close cooperation with the United Nations and fellow Member States, will continue its strong support for the efforts of the Council aimed at better carrying out its guiding mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

Annex 46
Statement by the Permanent Representative of Singapore to the United Nations, Burhan Gafoor

Allow me to express my appreciation to Estonia for convening this timely and important discussion on the working methods of the Security Council. My delegation also appreciates the leadership of Kuwait and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the previous and current Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, on this issue. We look forward to incorporating the eight Notes by the President that were adopted in December 2019 into the revised note S/2017/507 at the next opportunity. We also thank Ambassador Rhonda King and Ms. Karin Landgren of the Security Council Report for their insightful briefings today.

At the open debate on this topic last year (see S/PV.8539), I highlighted our expectation that all elected members take working methods seriously during their term in the Council. Indeed, one of the yardsticks against which we will judge all elected members is their commitment to improving the working methods of the Council. We are therefore heartened that the group of 10 elected members of the Council (E-10) has, for a second consecutive year, reiterated its commitment in this regard. Singapore fully endorses the joint statement by the E-10. This is not to divide the Council between the permanent and elected members, but to increase transparency and accountability to the wider United Nations membership. After all, the Charter of the United Nations clearly states that the Council acts on behalf of all United Nations Members, which have conferred on the Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. As the vast majority of States Members of the United Nations are not members of the Security Council and often face great difficulties or resource constraints in being elected to the Council, it is of utmost importance that the Council's work be conducted transparently.

As a small State, Singapore strongly supports improving the Council's working methods. This perspective benefits all States, large or small, including the permanent members of the Council. It is an area where we can make an immediate and noticeable difference without getting caught up in the legalities and technicalities pertaining to Charter amendments. I would like to draw attention to several areas.

First, we are pleased at the efforts undertaken to preserve transparency and accountability despite the challenges posed by coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The Council was the first main body of the United Nations to adapt its practices to ensure business continuity without sacrificing transparency and accountability. We are encouraged by the Council's efforts to continually improve its provisional working methods in the light of COVID-19 and commend in particular the letters each successive presidency has issued to reaffirm and improve upon these practices. A greater number of public meetings have also been held; since the outbreak of the pandemic, 16 open video-teleconferences have been convened. We welcome the continued publication of the outcomes of these meetings, including the written records of all the statements submitted. As for closed consultations, we understand that they are often necessary to promote candid and frank discussions among the main stakeholders. Nevertheless, we believe that it would be useful if key decision points from these meetings were shared with the wider membership.

The General Assembly's consideration of the annual report of the Council is a vital exercise in transparency and accountability. We trust that the new timelines stipulated in note S/2019/997, namely, that the report must be

“discussed and thereafter adopted by the Council no later than 30 May, in time for its consideration by the General Assembly immediately thereafter”,

will be upheld. It is important for the General Assembly to have robust discussions on the work of the Council, as that enhances the legitimacy and credibility of the Council. Similarly, the monthly assessments of the work of the Council are equally important. We are disappointed that only seven monthly assessments were issued for 2019 and note that only two monthly assessments have been issued thus far for 2020. We hope that more Council members will submit their monthly reports on time.

My second point is on inclusiveness. We are encouraged that the Council has made greater use of various formats, such as the Arria Formula meeting and the Toledo-style dialogue, to engage more interactively not just with the wider membership of the United Nations, but also with members of civil society. We are also encouraged by the regularization of introductory and wrap-up meetings with the wider membership by the presidency of each month and are pleased that the date and time of these meetings is now being communicated to all Member States well in advance. We hope that these meetings will continue as a standard practice and that they will contain more interactive discussions and greater analysis.

My delegation is also encouraged by some signs of increased intra-Council inclusiveness. The earlier on-boarding of newly elected members is a positive step to better equip the elected 10 members of the Security Council for their terms. Nevertheless, we think that there is room for improvement in the burden-sharing system and distribution of work among Council members. In particular, we hope that more Council members will be given the opportunity to assume penholderships or co-penholderships on issues. A monopoly over penholderships has potential drawbacks. It increases the risk of Council products being drafted from a fixed lens and disenfranchises the Council members that do not have opportunities to take a lead role on issues. A Council with members who feel sidelined is not only non-inclusive but will also be ineffective in representing the interests of the wider United Nations membership.

My third point relates to agility and effectiveness. The Council's record on this aspect remains mixed, with a strong voice being taken on some specific issues, but a lack of timely and adequate action on others. The veto unfortunately has too often been used to block Council action aimed at preventing mass atrocity crimes. Singapore joined more than 100 countries in supporting the Franco-Mexican initiative and the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct on limiting the use of the veto in the consideration of mass atrocity crimes. While the permanent five members have special privileges, these privileges come with increased responsibilities. This perspective applies not only to the use of the veto on draft resolutions, but also to the "informal" vetoes on other products of the Council. Otherwise, the Council would not be able to discharge its duties in the maintenance of international peace and security.

In conclusion, we call on all members to continue to engage constructively in improving the working methods of the Council by making practical proposals. We thank the Estonian presidency for convening this discussion today and look forward to a good outcome of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions under the able leadership of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Annex 47
Statement by the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, Michal Mlynár

I wish to congratulate Estonia on its election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council and on assuming the presidency of the Council this month. In addition, we thank it for organizing today's debate on the issue of working methods of the Security Council.

Working methods, not only of the Council but also of other organs of the United Nations, have always been an issue of interest for a large number of delegations, as they are intrinsically linked to the functioning of our Organization as the cornerstone of global multilateralism. The issue of working methods has once again come to the fore as we collectively try to overcome the various challenges the coronavirus disease pandemic presents to the international community. In this regard, I wish to thank the successive presidencies of the Council — China, the Dominican Republic and Estonia — for taking all the necessary steps to enable the Council to continue conducting its important work in maintaining international peace and security.

Once the current restrictions will have been lifted and the United Nations membership is able to return to holding regular, in-person meetings, we will have to thoroughly reflect on the approaches we will have devised in the face of the pandemic and their effects on the functioning of multilateral institutions or, more generally, on the very conduct of diplomatic relations itself. However, it would be premature to have that reflection now. Accordingly, I wish to address some general issues pertaining to the working methods of the Council.

Almost 14 years have passed since the adoption of the first note 507 by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507), on 19 July 2006, after intensive work by the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, currently chaired by Ambassador Inga Rhonda King of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. My delegation had the opportunity to chair the Informal Working Group in 2007, right after the able leadership of the Working Group by Japan. Our chairmanship aimed at ensuring a wider implementation of the first note 507. We are happy to see that, since then, two revised versions of the note, in 2010 and 2017, respectively, were subsequently elaborated under separate Japanese chairpersonships. The latter note, adopted on 30 August 2017 (S/2017/507), addresses nearly all aspects of Security Council practice. It is important to continue to strengthen efforts to implement the existing measures and commitments set out in S/2017/507. Similarly, the improvement of the working methods and the pursuit of greater transparency, inclusiveness, representativeness and accountability of the Council must remain an ongoing and consistent process.

While recognizing achievements made and mindful of remaining challenges, my country is of the view that, in future, more attention should be given to the following areas.

First, efforts aimed at enhancing openness in the work of the Security Council, including the work of its subsidiary bodies, should continue. Interaction and dialogue between the Security Council and States that are not members of the Council, in particular those directly concerned and affected, should be further enhanced and broadened.

Secondly, substantive engagement of the Council with troop- and police-contributing countries should be further improved to strengthen the basis for decision-making in the Council and increase the incentive for the general United Nations membership to support peace operations.

Thirdly, the timely submission of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly would enable more substantive consideration of the report, in line with the mandate of the General Assembly as the main deliberative organ of the United Nations. The discussions on such an important report must not be conducted in a perfunctory manner.

Fourthly, reporting cycles for various reports of the Secretary-General should be adjusted so that they reflect the situation on the ground more genuinely. Otherwise, the unnecessarily frequent submission of some reports may result in their not constituting a meaningful substantive contribution to the deliberations of the Council. In contrast, the Council may benefit from shortening the reporting cycles on matters of priority or urgency.

Fifthly, further development of more active and meaningful relationships with the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council and other relevant bodies could increase the Security Council's effectiveness in responding to conflicts and strengthen its role in conflict prevention and sustaining peace. We are convinced that the expertise, insights and recommendations of the Peacebuilding Commission should be used more frequently and more effectively by the Security Council, as they represent a very important contribution to better-informed deliberations of the Council. Such an approach should not be limited to country-specific configurations, but extend to thematic issues like women, peace and security, youth, peace and security, and security sector reform.

Sixthly, further consideration should be given to ways of improving the work of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council, which are crucial for the implementation of Council decisions. That is especially relevant for the various sanctions committees, considering the impact and the scope of the sanction regimes and their effects on human rights and due process.

The role of the non-permanent members in shaping and codifying Security Council working methods has proven to be very valuable and constructive. Having said that, I would like to wish the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, as well as you, Mr. President, as Vice-Chair, every success in guiding its important endeavours.

Annex 48

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations on behalf of the members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, Jürg Lauber

I am pleased to submit this statement on behalf of members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group — Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Maldives, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sweden, Uruguay and Switzerland. One of the core objectives of the ACT group is to encourage better working methods in United Nations organs, in particular the Security Council.

We thank today's briefers for their statements and commend the efforts deployed by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in its capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions.

The present context illustrates the existential importance of working methods that meet a high standard of transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. After the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic rendered physical meetings impossible, adapting the working methods to the new situation has been essential for the Security Council in order to ensure business continuity. Doing so as quickly as possible is also a key responsibility of the Council towards the wider United Nations membership, on behalf of which the Security Council discharges its mandate. The current crisis thus demonstrates the urgent need for continuous progress on working methods, not only with respect to agreeing on new improvements but also to implementing what has been agreed upon.

Against that backdrop, the ACT group would like to underline important progress and address shortcomings, first in the context of the current situation and, secondly, in the broader context of the working methods of the Security Council. We would also like to make several concrete proposals that could enhance the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Security Council's work.

The ACT group acknowledges the unprecedented nature of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Secretary-General stated in his 9 April briefing to the Security Council “the world faces the gravest test since the founding of the United Nations”, and the Security Council is not immune to that situation. While the lack of leadership by the Security Council in addressing the pandemic and its impact on international peace and security is of great concern to our group, we appreciate the agility that the Council has shown with regard to its working methods. Albeit with a slow start by members, the Council has demonstrated flexibility and innovation by agreeing on adaptations that have allowed it to continue to consider the items on its agenda in keeping with its reporting cycle, to address topics and situations requiring the Council's attention, to vote on resolutions on mandate renewals and other matters and to adopt presidential statements. We congratulate, in particular, the successive presidencies of the Security Council since the outbreak of the pandemic for their efforts.

The ACT group also acknowledges the progress made in terms of transparency and inclusivity since the Security Council started to carry out its work virtually and after a worrisome start in the new mode. We particularly welcome the fact that all meetings taking place in lieu of briefings in the open Chamber are now being webcast in their entirety, as well as the circulation by the presidency of written statements by briefers and Council members and non-members, where applicable, as official Council documents. The solution to allow the wider membership to participate in

writing in open video-teleconferences (VTCs) happening in lieu of open debates is another pragmatic and positive innovation. We also welcome the fact that the release of press elements has become the norm rather than the exception since the beginning of the pandemic.

However, more efforts are necessary for the Council to meet the standards of efficiency, as well as of accountability and inclusion towards the wider United Nations membership and for the Council to be effective. All that is to be expected, notwithstanding the unprecedented and extraordinary nature of the current situation. To begin with, the absence of any meetings or formal action by the Council for more than two weeks after it was rendered incapable to meet physically is not acceptable in view of the importance of its mandate, when in fact it should show leadership in addressing the crisis. In the future we expect the Security Council to be fully prepared to switch instantly to a virtual mode and to otherwise effectively adapt to any other situation where physical meetings are again not possible. We call on all Council's members to show flexibility, agility and open-mindedness with regard to necessary adjustments in the procedural framework of the Council, with the overall objective to maintain a state of readiness to meet and make decisions in such unique situations.

Furthermore, in spite of the welcome agreement on a written procedure to adopt resolutions, we are concerned that the Council is not in a position to ensure swift reaction to developments pertaining to the maintenance of international peace and security. The ACT group encourages the Council to agree on an updated procedure that allows the Council to vote virtually and in real time. In addition, the ACT group sees no reason that all virtual meetings taking place as per the Council's mandate are not included in the Council's formal programme of work and *The Journal of the United Nations*. The Council meetings taking place currently as VTCs should be deemed to be official formal meetings of the Council. In the same manner, the Council's subsidiary bodies need to resume their work by either using written procedures or holding VTC meetings as official meetings. We are concerned about the effects that the situation may have on the Council's reporting instruments under the Charter of the United Nations, in particular its annual report. In spite of the aforementioned progress with regard to inclusion, the Council should take up discussions on the interpretation of virtual meetings in all the official languages of the United Nations. We are also concerned by the fact that civil society representatives, in particular women, have had little opportunity so far to brief the Council since the beginning of the practice of holding virtual meetings. We call on the Council not to let the pandemic reverse important progress made over the last years in that respect.

Looking ahead, we also see great merit in considering the present crisis as an opportunity to draw lessons and make some recent adaptations permanent, provided that they would also reinforce the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Security Council under normal circumstances. Among those adaptations, the Security Council might consider continuing the practice of circulating in writing all statements made by briefers and Council members at open meetings to all the permanent missions. We would also welcome discussions regarding the possibility of adding the current format of open debates to the Council's toolbox, characterized by the submission of written statements by non-Council members, with a view to enhancing the Council's efficiency. No matter their exact modalities, we believe that the working methods governing open debates should allow member and non-member States of the Council to participate on an equal footing, and we recall that the raison d'être of open debates, as today's open debate demonstrates, is to give the opportunity to the wider membership to inform Security Council deliberations rather than to merely accompany the adoption of pre-defined Council outcomes.

Given those priorities, the ACT group encourages the separation of the debate from the work on, and adoption of, a related outcome.

In addition, we continue to note the need for more open debates on country situations, a tool which the Council has used effectively in the past. We also encourage the Council to expand the possibility of direct participation by briefers and Member States who are unable to travel to New York, as the crisis has demonstrated further the feasibility of carrying out virtual exchanges between interested parties, including at the highest political level. The full potential of technology can also be harnessed in a variety of other ways — for instance, by exploring the possibility of conducting virtual Security Council visits to the field as a complementary instrument to existing and established physical visits. The ACT group stands ready to contribute to the process of identifying lessons learned from the crisis and to support the work of the Informal Working Group in that process.

Beyond the current situation, we are convinced of the importance of maintaining our attention on the constant improvement of the Security Council's working methods, of implementing good practices in a consistent manner and of not backpedalling on previous decisions and commitments. In that regard, we particularly welcome the adoption in December 2019, under Kuwait's leadership as Chair of the Informal Working Group, of eight notes by the President on various issues of importance for the enhancement of the Council's working methods. We must also acknowledge the progress made in important aspects of the transparency and inclusivity of the Council's work, such as the holding of wrap-up sessions. These have been organized by 11 of the last 12 Council presidencies over the last 12 months and have overall been increasingly interactive.

The ACT group calls on the Security Council to show consistency in the implementation of presidential note S/2017/507 and of the eight most recently adopted notes. Among them, the Council now has the opportunity to honour its commitment regarding its annual report, which that should be adopted in the spring, possibly before the end of this month. We would like to recall the importance of that process as a vehicle for transparency and accountability in the Council's work and look forward to the opportunity to exchange on its content in the General Assembly as shortly as possible. Closer interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly is also necessary in situations where the Security Council drifts away from the larger membership — and thus the world — including when it is not able to take decisions owing to the use or threat of use of the veto. The ACT group continues to encourage all States, members and non-members of the Security Council alike, to join the 121 signatories of the ACT code of conduct and to implement it.

Furthermore, the ACT group calls on the Council to build on the success achieved in the context of the Informal Working Group in 2019 and continue its work on important improvements that have not yet been agreed upon. First, the responsibilities of members in Security Council matters must be more equally shared so as to enhance the participation of all members, including elected members, in particular when it comes to drafting Council outcomes. Secondly, the fairness and clarity of sanctions processes are important determinants for the implementation and impact of United Nations sanctions and, in that regard, the Ombudsperson mechanism is a key element for the preservation of the integrity, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's sanctions system. We therefore once again call on the Security Council to take all the necessary measures to further strengthen the independence and impartiality of the Office of the Ombudsperson and to eventually expand the mandate of the Ombudsperson to other sanctions regimes.

We welcome the exemplary manner in which today's discussion is being conducted in relation to principles of accountability, transparency and efficiency

and despite the extraordinary situation. As the pandemic acutely demonstrates, the working methods of the Security Council are of interest to the whole United Nations membership, and are a way to guarantee its readiness and agility in the face of any crisis. Improving them is our collective responsibility. As recent progress and shortcomings show, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness are mutually reinforcing principles that must continue to guide improvements in the working methods of the Security Council. The ACT group is committed to doing its part and to actively contribute and support any initiative to that end.

Annex 49
Statement by the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations, Feridun Sinirlioğlu

Regular debates on the working methods of the Security Council are both necessary and useful to make progress towards achieving the most needed improvements in this area. The emergence of the coronavirus pandemic has also brought additional elements into the existing discussion, particularly on how to safeguard the transparency and effectiveness of the Security Council during extraordinary circumstances.

We are encouraged to observe that we have achieved some progress on the working methods over the past years. Yet we are far from ensuring the transparency, accountability and efficiency of the Council. To achieve that, we must start with increasing the interaction between the Council and the wider membership. Closed meetings and informal consultations should be kept to a minimum, meaningful participation of States with a legitimate stake in the Council's deliberations should be ensured throughout the decision-making process and civil society and humanitarian experts should be given more opportunities to brief the Council.

Transparency is especially important with regard to peacekeeping operations. The Council must cooperate more closely with troop- and police-contributing countries. The success of sanctions regimes depends on the cooperation of all Member States. Ensuring transparency in the working methods of subsidiary organs, keeping regular channels of communication open and making the relevant documentation accessible to the entire United Nations membership remain crucial.

We must also ensure that the elected members are on the same footing as the permanent five. Among other things, the responsibility of penholdership should be distributed evenly among permanent and elected members, and the penholders should engage in timely consultations with all relevant United Nations members with openness and flexibility.

There is also a need to increase coordination and cooperation between the Council and other main bodies of the United Nations. Better coordination by the Security Council with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat, as well as with the Peacebuilding Commission, is crucial. More interaction with regional organizations would also contribute to the Council's effectiveness.

Another improvement would be to better incorporate conflict prevention into the Security Council agenda. The current experience indicates that the Council often finds itself responding to crises in an incremental manner, making more use of the tools at its disposal only as situations deteriorate. There is broad consensus among Member States on the need to enhance our efforts for prevention, including through mediation efforts.

The use of the veto has also proved to hamper the most needed role that the Council has to play in a given situation. Better outcomes can be achieved, and more humanitarian tragedies can be prevented, if the Council's tools are utilized much earlier, without resorting to the veto as a tool to advance national interests.

Finally, I would also like to emphasize that we consider the topic of working methods as one of the crucial components of the broader Security Council reform agenda. Updating the methods of work cannot be a substitute for engaging in more substantive talks on Security Council reform.

We must continue to search for a constructive solution to make the Security Council more representative, accountable and transparent by identifying a common denominator that can garner the widest possible political acceptance by Member States.

Annex 50

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this virtual open debate on Security Council working methods. The task of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions is crucial to ensuring that the Security Council functions in a transparent, effective and efficient manner. I wish to commend the current and previous Chairs of the Working Group for their efforts in contributing towards that objective.

Today's debate takes places against the backdrop of an unprecedented pandemic that, among other things, has affected how the United Nations system conducts its business. We commend the work done by the Presidents of the Security Council — China, the Dominican Republic and now Estonia — over these past few weeks to ensure continuity of work while work-from-home orders were put in place. Members of the Council have developed mechanisms to ensure that it continues to deliver on its mandate, adopting resolutions and, ultimately, serving those affected by threats to international peace and security. At the same time, under these extraordinary circumstances, living up to the principles of transparency, efficiency and effectiveness for the Security Council has gained a new importance and may necessitate some innovative procedures going forward.

The world relies on the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, even when meetings do not take place at the iconic horseshoe table. We welcome the emphasis on ensuring transparency when devising the interim working methods under the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak by the Council presidencies. We encourage Council members to further enhance the existing procedures for the transparency and inclusiveness of the Council's work by allowing the delivery of oral statements by Member States in open meetings, even if they are held as video-teleconferences. The enormous interest and high-level participation at the Arria Formula meeting marking the end of the Second World War in Europe is an illustration of the interest of Member States to continue contributing to the discussions of this body.

The Security Council will require agility and flexibility to operate virtually in the new normal of a post-COVID-19 world. We see merit in the Council sharing with the broader membership its reflections and assessment of how it has adjusted to the virtual ways of working. Such a reflection on the practices employed could provide useful guidance for future scenarios when in-person meetings might be impossible. This could include lessons related to not only the conduct of meetings and the adoption of resolutions, but also how the Council has operated during these difficult times more broadly.

Concerning the broader issue of working methods beyond those specific to COVID-19, I would note that the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform have been discussing proposals aimed at enhancing the working methods of the Council. I have had the honour of overseeing the process as co-Chair of the negotiations for the third successive year, and I am encouraged to note the convergence between the work of the intergovernmental negotiations and the Informal Working Group. To complement that work, in my national capacity, I would propose three recommendations that would significantly enhance the effectiveness and transparency of the Security Council more broadly.

First, achieving a more balanced division of labour for penholdership is not simply a question of inclusiveness, but it could contribute to a more effective Council. We note that discussions on the necessity of expanding the penholder system to

include more elected members have been ongoing for some years. We recognize that some progress has been made, notably the inclusion of some Chairs of sanctions committees as co-penholders. However, this is far from a systematic practice. The Chairs of sanctions committees can in fact add considerable value and an important perspective in drafting Council outcomes and should therefore be consulted, if not serve as co-penholders.

Secondly, improving the interaction with troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs/PCCs) is not a new request and is another area where progress has certainly been made over the years. One of the eight presidential notes (S/2019/995) adopted under Kuwait's chairmanship of the Informal Working Group included a provision allowing relevant participants in Council meetings, including troop- and police-contributing countries, to have access to the reports of the Secretary-General at least four working days before they are discussed in the Council. Nevertheless, room for improvement remains. Importantly, simply having more meetings with TCCs and PCCs does not enhance their relationship with the Council. The Council should strive to establish a more substantive and interactive three-way dialogue among the Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries throughout the mandate cycle of missions so as to consider the planning, design and implementation of mandates.

Finally, in previous open debates the United Arab Emirates has highlighted the need to build and support the capacity of States so that they can abide by their legal obligations arising from Council resolutions. This should start with the Council adopting shorter resolutions with clearer language that takes into consideration the wide spectrum of capacity of States to be able to implement them. The Council should also more systematically ensure that new legal obligations are explained to the entire membership — for example, through meetings with the various Chairs of the sanctions committees, allowing the membership to ask questions.

The coronavirus disease outbreak has presented the Security Council with an unexpected situation. The founders of the United Nations could not have imagined the Council functioning virtually but, in fact, the adjustments it has made to the new circumstances have allowed it to fulfil its primary functions. Let us use this opportunity to demonstrate to the world the ability of the Security Council to be nimble and flexible in fulfilling that function while, at the same time, adhering to the principles of efficiency, effectiveness and transparency.

Annex 51

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations

There is hardly a better time to have a discussion on the working methods of the Security Council than in the current extraordinary circumstances.

From March until now, we all have witnessed an evolution of the Council's adaptation to the new reality of being forced to move its deliberations and negotiations online. That journey has been nothing but quite remarkable. When the lockdown owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak was imposed in March, for a short while the Council virtually disappeared from the public eye and the wider United Nations membership had to rely on scraps of information circulating on Twitter. Moving forward to 8 May, a truly global Arria Formula meeting was held with the participation of more than 40 ministerial-level speakers from all over the world and a public video stream on various platforms visible to all.

The adjustment of the Council was perhaps not as swift and all-encompassing as many of us would have liked, but the progress in the opening up of the Council's activities is undeniable. The presidencies of China, the Dominican Republic and Estonia have all made their very important contributions to adjusting the Council to the current harsh realities.

Ukraine has always been among the proponents of a more transparent Council, and we welcome the progress made on that track in recent months. In the current circumstances, it is particularly important to hold open video-teleconferences whenever possible. Closed video-teleconferences, an equivalent to consultations of the whole, should be the exception rather than the rule.

We proceed from the understanding that, if closed video-teleconferences are held, the outside world deserves to know what was discussed. We would therefore like to see a more concerted effort being made in the preparation of substantive elements for the press. The practice of having joint media stakeouts by European Union or wider groups of Council members is especially important when contentious issues are discussed and reaching consensus language on joint press elements is all but impossible.

It is equally encouraging to see that some Council members make public their remarks delivered at those closed meetings. Even though that practice is not yet firmly established, it is a great step forward towards greater transparency, which is something that all of us want.

During our term on the Council in 2016 to 2017, we did our best to contribute to ensuring greater openness of the Council. It is encouraging to see that most of the current members are committed to that goal as well.

In that regard, we would like to pay tribute to the dedicated efforts last year by Kuwait's delegation, whose perseverance ensured the adoption of eight presidential notes aimed at improving the working methods of the Council. We see some of them already being implemented, while others may take some time to be put into practice.

Ukraine welcomes the most recent application of presidential note S/2019/992 by the Estonian presidency, which issued an addendum listing all currently scheduled activities that are not reflected in the approved provisional programme of work. We hope that all the following presidencies will duly implement that note as well.

However, there is one matter that has been problematic for quite some time — the much criticized and, equally, much expected annual report. It is worth recalling that presidential note S/2017/507 foresees the preparation of the annual report in two

stages: drafting the introduction part, which should be completed by 31 January, and compiling the whole report, which should be completed by 15 March.

We realize that the COVID-19 lockdown this year has disrupted all timetables, but we would very much appreciate to learn from Council members as to where the preparation of the report for 2019 stands as of now. Keeping in mind the value of monthly assessments in the preparation of the report, we note with concern that five monthly assessments for 2019 are still missing. It is hardly a sign for optimism. We encourage those delegations that have not yet submitted their reports to do so in a timely manner. In that context, it is also worth recalling that presidential note S/1997/451 provides for the preparation of such a report under a respective delegation's responsibility. On the other hand, we are very happy to see that this year's presidencies of Viet Nam and China have already submitted their monthly assessments in a timely manner, and we hope that others will swiftly follow suit.

Another issue that we all will follow very closely this year is the process of preparations of newly elected members for the work on the Council. In the light of the ongoing coronavirus-related challenges, it is particularly important that, following timely elections, incoming members receive all the necessary support in the process of getting ready to carry out their duties for the next two years.

It is by responding promptly in crisis situations such as this, by adjusting to existing limitations, by exploring new opportunities, by adapting its working methods to the needs of the time, by following up on its own commitments, by opening up new venues for engaging the United Nations wider membership, and by being proactive and transparent that the Council can truly prove its relevance, strengthen its credibility and deliver concrete outcomes.
