



WORKING METHODS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Expected Council Action

The open debate on Security Council working methods, originally scheduled for 29 April, is now expected to take place on 22 April. No formal outcome is planned, but it is hoped that the debate will inform the work of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions (chaired by Japan) for the remainder of 2010.

Background

The debate scheduled for 22 April is the third ever open debate by the Security Council on the body's working methods (the first took place in 1994 and the second in 2008). On 30 March, Security Council Report published a Special Research Report entitled *Security Council Working Methods—A Work in Progress?* looking at developments related to working methods in the last several years. This Update Report highlights some issues related specifically to the upcoming open debate and to the concept paper that Japan circulated on 1 April (S/2010/165).

Japan has played an active role in the Council's work on its working methods. In 2006, when it previously served as an elected member of the Council, Japan chaired the Informal Working Group and succeeded in producing an extensive document capturing all major Council practices and understandings related to working methods as of July 2006 (S/2006/507). Having been elected to the Council for the 2009-2010 term, Japan undertook chairing of the Informal Working Group for the two years of its term and decided to use its April 2010 presidency of the Council as an opportunity for holding the debate.

The concept paper states that the objective of the debate is to assess the implementation of the measures set out in the July 2006 document, taking into account issues raised in the 2008 debate as well as the most recent relevant Council practices. The paper outlines three broad issues for debate: transparency, interaction with members at large and the efficiency of the Security Council. It encourages participants in the debate to put forward practical suggestions regarding improvements in the working methods of the Council.

Following the debate, Japan plans to continue working within the Informal Working Group on the issues raised in the debate and to issue a revised version of the 2006 document on working methods later in the year.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Member states not on the Council have historically been very interested in this topic because, among other things, working methods and procedures determine the degree to which members at large can contribute to the work of the Council.

Members of the Council (in particular the P5) have always insisted that the Council, and it alone, is the arbiter of its working methods. Yet they tend to acknowledge that the standing of the Council with the international community can be enhanced by greater transparency. They recognise that transparency and interaction with the membership at large helps the Council gain support for its decisions and improves the implementation in cases where the carrying out of its decision requires cooperation of member states (in particular, decisions related to peacekeeping, counterterrorism and sanctions). Thus, while the degree of support for the Japanese initiative among Council members varies, members generally feel that having a debate and listening to the views of UN membership will be useful.

UN Documents

Selected Security Council Documents

- S/2010/165 (1 April 2010) was the concept paper for the 22 April 2010 debate on working methods.
- S/2008/528 (4 August 2008) was the concept paper for the 27 August 2008 open debate on working methods.
- S/2006/507 (19 July 2006) was a presidential note containing the outcome of the six months of work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Issues in 2006.
- S/96.REV.7 (1983) is the most recent version of the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council.
- S/96 (24 June 1946) is the document containing the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council.

Selected Security Council Debates

- S/PV.5968 and resumption 1 (27 August 2008) was the second open debate on working methods.
- S/PV.3483 (16 December 1994) was the first open debate on working methods.

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