

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 26 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to send you the report of the thirteenth annual workshop for the newly elected members of the Security Council, which was held on 5 and 6 November 2015 at the Greentree Foundation in Manhasset, New York (see annex). The final report has been compiled in accordance with the Chatham House Rule under the sole responsibility of the Permanent Mission of Finland.

On the basis of the very positive feedback that we have received from the participants each year, the Government of Finland remains committed to sponsoring the workshop as an annual event. The Government of Finland hopes that the report will contribute to a better understanding of the complexity of the work of the Security Council.

I should be grateful, accordingly, if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kai Sauer
Ambassador

Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 26 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

“Hitting the ground running”: thirteenth annual workshop for newly elected members of the Security Council

**5 and 6 November 2015
Greentree Foundation
Manhasset, New York**

The Government of Finland, in cooperation with the School of International and Public Affairs of Columbia University and the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, convened the thirteenth annual workshop for the newly elected members of the Security Council on 5 and 6 November 2015.

The annual workshops have served two essential purposes. Their core purpose has been to help to familiarize the newly elected members with the practices, procedures and working methods of the Security Council so that they are able to “hit the ground running” when they join the Council the following January. That founding mandate has guided and sustained the workshops over the past 13 years. A second purpose has become increasingly evident over time: to provide current, as well as incoming, members with a highly valued opportunity to reflect on the work of the Council in an informal and interactive setting. To that end, their continuing conversation has been conducted under the Chatham House Rule of non-attribution.

At the opening dinner, on 5 November, the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations, Ambassador Kai Sauer, provided welcoming remarks, and the Chef de Cabinet gave a keynote address and responded to questions and comments from the participants.

On 6 November, the full-day programme included round-table sessions on the following three themes:

- (a) State of the Security Council 2015: taking stock and looking ahead (session I);
- (b) Working methods and subsidiary bodies (session II);
- (c) Lessons learned: reflections of the class of 2015 (session III).

Opening dinner

In her keynote address, the Chef de Cabinet emphasized that the work and mandate of the Security Council remained as relevant as they were at its founding 70 years ago. The increased interconnectivity of the world driven by technological advances, however, demanded more innovative thinking about how to address a range of transnational threats to international peace and security. Questions of national sovereignty needed to take into account the regional and global dimensions of such problems as climate change, migration and health pandemics, which transcended the geographical boundaries of the nation State and exposed the vulnerabilities of our societies. As demonstrated by the efforts to destroy or remove chemical weapons from the Syrian Arab Republic, the Council was capable of fresh

approaches and unified action, even in situations in which the views of its members were deeply polarized.

According to her, the confluence of a series of important review processes on peacebuilding, peace operations and women and peace and security offered a unique opportunity, as well as an obligation, to make the next two years a period of adaptive thinking and solutions. In addition, there were new proposals for development and humanitarian financing. Through those wide-ranging reviews, some common themes had emerged. There was growing recognition that issues of conflict, climate change, migration and organized crime were inherently linked and directly fuelled stresses and shocks that, in turn, could trigger political and humanitarian crises affecting security, stability and sustainable development. The reviews had also confirmed the need to make the United Nations more fit for purpose.

In the face of those challenges, she continued, it was increasingly evident that the peace and security toolbox was outdated. Too often, peacekeeping was regarded as a panacea at the expense of more robust political diplomacy that could address the causes of conflict. Traditional notions of peacekeeping were ill-suited to dealing with non-State armed groups and asymmetrical warfare. The High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, led by the former President of Timor-Leste, José Ramos-Horta, had identified twin challenges: the failure to prevent new conflicts and the failure to resolve those that persisted, which had left the United Nations in constant crisis mode. The Panel had therefore called for a shift from an unsustainable and reactive crisis management mode to a more proactive approach. Specifically, it had identified four mutually reinforcing steps for enhancing the effectiveness of peace operations:

- The United Nations needed to engage earlier, including by giving the Secretary-General a mandate to undertake contingency planning and produce options at an earlier point in a developing crisis. To better inform planning, it needed to invest in forging a deeper understanding of a given situation and what underlay an emerging conflict and drove the violence. It needed to do a better job of leveraging the existing knowledge of the United Nations system and of partners already on the ground. That would provide the foundation for sound analysis, rather than the present tendency to embrace underplanned, underresourced, and ill-equipped “solutions” when the Organization was under immense pressure to do something.
- There was a need to focus more keenly on conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy. That would entail devising concrete strategies to translate early warning into early action. A renewed focus on conflict prevention would benefit from a fuller understanding of the implications of human rights violations for the maintenance of international peace and security. In that regard, the Secretary-General’s Human Rights Up Front initiative was placing human rights concerns at the centre of the work of the Secretariat. Could human rights considerations be more effectively mainstreamed into the deliberations of the Security Council as well? That was an area in which the Secretariat could work with the Council to enable constructive discussion of such questions in the context of crisis prevention and mitigation.
- There needed to be sound political strategies at the heart of the efforts in both conflict prevention and response. The Council should not rely on operational

tools, including peace operations, to deliver political settlements to conflicts. Political strategies and the incentives and disincentives required to deliver results remained the domain of Member States. Experience had shown that the voice of a united Council delivering a strong, coherent political message to the parties to a conflict had more impact than any number of brigades of blue helmets.

- The High-level Independent Panel had stressed that peace operations were strongest when they operated as a genuine partnership between the main players. To that end, it was essential that the Council and troop contributors work hand in glove to maintain a common vision of the mandate and the mission. The Secretariat should have a role in that, and a deeper triangular partnership between troop- and police-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat must, and would, be facilitated.

She cautioned that, in 2016, there would be no shortage of challenging situations lacking easy solutions. It would be essential to work together in finding ways of applying those important maxims to common efforts to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations.

Turning to the question of how to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization in sustaining peace, she highlighted the conclusions of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, led by the former Minister for Foreign Affairs and Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations, Gert Rosenthal. The Group had called for a more holistic approach that recognized that peacebuilding should be pursued throughout the conflict cycle. She observed that that confirmed what had been seen on the ground, namely that sequencing did not work, since the transition from conflict to a post-conflict situation was not a linear process. When proper peacebuilding interventions were pursued as part of a conflict prevention strategy and not as an afterthought, they could actually help to prevent conflict.

In her view, although peacebuilding was often relegated conceptually to the sphere of development and not recognized as a political matter integral to questions of peace and security, peacebuilding fell squarely within the peace and security remit of the Council. Fragmentation within the peacebuilding arena had been driven, she contended, by the disconnect between the peace, security and development pillars, that is, by a denial of the interconnectedness between the foundational pillars of the Organization. That tendency, moreover, had led the Organization to work in silos, unable to leverage the synergies between those pillars, let alone with partners, which was required for effective peacebuilding. That would also entail strengthening collaboration with other multilateral and regional partners and becoming more adept at enabling “from behind”, given the primacy of national and local ownership of peacebuilding.

She then addressed the review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, which she termed a landmark and inspired decision by the Council in which it acknowledged the inextricable link between gender equality and the maintenance of international peace and security. Despite the codification of normative standards, she lamented, in practice the Organization continued to fall short in terms of including either women or women’s perspectives in its work. If the Organization was to adapt and evolve to meet future challenges, then it must do much better at taking women’s voices into

account in the making and implementation of policy. Likewise, it must offer leadership opportunities for women if it was to remain relevant and legitimate.

She then returned to one of her opening themes: the need to build stronger regional partnerships to address problems that transcended borders and challenged traditional notions of sovereignty in an era of growing interconnectedness. For reasons of both practicality and legitimacy, many of those issues called for region-wide responses. To harness the capacities and networks of regional organizations, fuller use of the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations would need to be made in future. One such challenge demanding region-wide responses had been the rise of violent extremism and the emergence of conflicts driven by non-State actors. To overcome that challenge, the Organization would need to expand its investment in the capacity of regional actors, including the African Union and the League of Arab States. Such regional arrangements had played essential roles in encouraging peace between their members and in finding negotiated solutions to violent conflicts, such as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan.

She emphasized that the United Nations could not and should not work alone. Regional partnerships were imperative, both to navigate complex crises and to ensure sustainability and legitimacy. The ongoing working relationship of the Council with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union had demonstrated the mutual benefits of a sustained dialogue on issues of common interest. For instance, it was evident that United Nations peace operations would need to operate before, after and with regional peace missions for the foreseeable future, underlining the need to structure principled strategic partnerships to address the new reality.

She noted that the Council had also been compelled to tackle some less traditional threats to international peace and security. One of those threats had been the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, which, at its height in mid-2014, risked compromising political stability in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The decisive response by the Council, including its bold declaration that the epidemic constituted “a threat to peace and security” in September 2014, had been instrumental in galvanizing the international response. That recognition of the intersections of health with peace and security was at present even more evident as protracted violence in fragile States and conflict zones had fuelled worsening health crises that posed possible threats to global peace and security. In addition to the rising death toll in South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic, the massive exodus of refugees into neighbouring countries and beyond had spread virulent threats of cholera, polio and malaria to regions where those diseases had long been controlled.

A second less traditional challenge was migration. As protracted conflict had left societies vulnerable to extremism and chronic underdevelopment, hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees had tried to reach Europe by land or sea and thousands had died in the attempt. That situation had become untenable. It had exposed the inherent shortcomings of trying to address crises of that magnitude with ad hoc solutions, such as securing borders, rather than dealing with root causes and focusing on finding sustainable political solutions. The crisis was fuelling extremism and could well have major political, economic, health, security and humanitarian implications. In an eerie parallel, it was the largest refugee crisis since the founding of the United Nations 70 years ago.

In conclusion, she emphasized that the United Nations was not a monolith. Even as it adapted and expanded to meet future challenges, the Organization remained a bastion of hope for those around the world who found themselves in difficult circumstances. To further the current multisectoral, complex and often asymmetrical peace and security agenda, the Security Council must maintain its legitimacy, authority and unity. Once more, it would need to adapt and evolve. In the current seminal period, the Council needed to understand when the United Nations should take the lead, as well as when it should not do so. Through the review processes, the Secretariat was seeking to take a longer-term, more holistic view, to leverage partnerships more effectively and to enhance conflict prevention by providing for human rights, the rule of law and development. The goal was to support the work and decisions of the Council, in part by addressing vulnerabilities before they ended up on its agenda. Increasingly, the Council was the only actor capable of legitimately addressing current transnational threats. While serving the Organization over the past 11 years, she commented, she had seen the Secretariat and the Council work closely together to devise creative solutions and to make the system work in response to unprecedented challenges. That must now become the rule and not the exception. The Council had never been more relevant or indispensable. The task before it was to translate and apply the lessons from all the reviews: to engage in the kind of soul-searching that would ensure that the Organization remained indispensable in the demanding years ahead.

Session I

State of the Security Council 2015: taking stock and looking ahead

Moderator

Ambassador Ramlan bin Ibrahim
Permanent Representative of Malaysia

Commentators

Ambassador Petr Ilichev
First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation

Ambassador Román Oyarzun Marchesi
Permanent Representative of Spain

Ambassador Michele J. Sison
Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America

The agenda for session I contained the following questions:

- How would you assess the Council's recent performance in fulfilling its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security? How does its record in 2015 compare with that in 2014 or in earlier years? What have been some of the high and low points of its performance since the previous workshop, in November 2014? Are the trend lines encouraging or discouraging?
- At the workshop in 2014, some participants cautioned against overly high expectations, while others pointed to a credibility gap between the demands being placed on the Council and its ability to deliver. Some questioned whether there was a direct correlation between the intensive work pace of the

Council and its effectiveness in preventing conflict and protecting populations on the ground. By what measures should the performance of the Council be assessed? Are there specific targets or goals that its members should articulate for the coming year? In terms of specific situations, where could it do better in 2016?

- In 2015, unlike in 2014, relatively few unexpected threats to international peace and security have emerged. It has proved difficult, however, to resolve a number of destructive and dangerous ongoing armed conflicts and some appear to be escalating. In the coming year, the Council will have a great deal of unfinished business on its agenda. Does that suggest, as its critics contend, that the Council is better at managing than preventing or resolving conflicts? Are any of those situations likely to be ripe for resolution in 2016? Should some of them be prioritized in the work of the Council over the course of the coming year?
- At this point, which threats to international peace and security are most worrisome, whether from a strategic, political, or humanitarian perspective? Which could be usefully addressed by Council action? What should members of the Council do or not do to avoid their escalation?
- Are there upcoming elections that could be associated with instability or emerging threats that should be the targets of preventive action by the Council in the coming months? Which of the preventive tools of Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter might be employed in those cases? Have any of those tools fallen into disrepair because of neglect or misuse? Do any need sharpening? Given that effective preventive diplomacy often requires partners, how well has the Council been able to work with regional and subregional arrangements, groups of friends, the Secretary-General and the Secretariat, and civil society in resolving specific conflicts over the past year? Are there situations that might benefit from fresh approaches or initiatives in 2016?
- Over the past year, the Council has responded energetically to the threat posed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and other armed groups that have highly sectarian agendas, practise violent extremism, recruit foreign fighters and target civilian populations. Are the measures authorized by the Council making a difference on the ground in terms of blunting those threats? Are further steps needed? Has there been sufficient collaboration between global, regional and national efforts to counter those groups and their virulent messages? What role has the Council played in those efforts, and what role should it play? Should they be framed under human protection or counter-terrorism narratives, or both? Could the Council do more to help to ensure that human rights are respected in the measures taken to defeat groups that have so little regard for human rights and humanitarian norms in the first place?
- Ominously and tragically, the number of people forcibly displaced by conflict in Darfur, Libya, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and elsewhere has again surged to record levels. Led by non-permanent members, the Council has begun to address that immense human drama in individual situations. However, could more be done in 2016 to address the factors behind this trend in a thematic or cross-cutting manner? What are the implications of this development for prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding practices

and doctrine? Should the Council begin to consider the longer-term implications for peace and security if such large numbers of people are displaced for years to come?

- The seventieth anniversary of the first meeting of the Council, in London in January 1946, is fast approaching. This commemorative year has already occasioned an unusually varied array of declarations, reviews and reports about different aspects of the work of the Council. Among them have been the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (S/2015/446), the declaration adopted at the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping, the Compendium of the High-level Review of United Nations Sanctions, the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Commitment to Action, and the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture:
 - Are there any cross-cutting themes or conclusions from those studies and events that should be taken into account as the Council considers its work in 2016? For instance, all of the reports call for the inclusion of a gender perspective in their areas of policymaking. The reports on peacekeeping and on peacebuilding stress the need for a much closer partnership with regional institutions and greater coherence among United Nations organs and across the United Nations system.
 - Those reports also call for enhanced resources and more focused political attention on conflict prevention. According to the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, “the Security Council, supported by the Secretariat, should seek to play an earlier role in addressing emerging conflicts and must do so with impartiality” (S/2015/446). Upstream prevention is also advocated in the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).
 - Are there specific recommendations from any of those reports that should be implemented by the Council in 2016? It included a number of measures in resolution 2242 (2015), in particular, requiring action by the Council, ranging from the participation of more women in peace processes, to considering gender perspectives in its deliberations on all conflict situations, insisting on zero tolerance and full accountability regarding sexual abuse and exploitation and the establishment of an informal expert group on women and peace and security, among other steps.
 - The High-level Independent Panel called for a rethinking of several dimensions of peacekeeping doctrine. More “sequenced and prioritized mandates” are needed, in its view, to ease “the sharp distinctions between peacekeeping operations and special political missions” and to permit “a continuum of responses and smoother transitions between different phases of a mission” (S/2015/446). Although the protection of civilians is a core objective of the United Nations, it called for a greater convergence between expectations and capabilities in that area. The Panel also underscored the need to clarify doctrine and develop capabilities for missions deployed to places where “there is little or no peace to keep” (ibid.), a condition that it predicted would be increasingly common in the years ahead. Should those points receive increased attention in the framing

and drafting of peacekeeping mandates in 2016 and beyond? Is this a matter of process, of substance, or both? Do the conclusions of the Panel have implications for Council interactions with troop-contributing and police-contributing countries and/or for the work of the Secretariat?

- In its report (S/2015/490), the Advisory Group of Experts stated that the Security Council, as “the main intergovernmental peacebuilding actor”, should seek the advice of the Peacebuilding Commission more regularly when drawing up “the peacebuilding dimensions of mandates”. With the goal of sustaining peace, the Commission, in turn, should become the “advisory bridge” between the Council and the General Assembly that “it was always intended to be”. Why has this institutional architecture never worked in practice? Will conditions have changed sufficiently in 2016 to make it work?
- Building on years of international efforts to better target, implement and monitor sanctions, the High-level Review of United Nations Sanctions called for a series of steps to enhance institutional integration within the United Nations, to improve the work of expert groups, to vet potential partners and to address due process and human rights concerns, among other things. Despite the need for improved implementation in those areas, is there any reason to doubt that the Council will continue to rely heavily on sanctions as relatively adaptable enforcement measures? In which of those areas should further improvements be sought in 2016?
- Over the course of the past year, where and when has collaboration with regional and subregional arrangements been most/least productive? How is the Council’s special relationship with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union faring? Are further steps needed? Will the tenth joint consultative meeting in 2016 offer an opportunity to review and refine that important relationship?
- Since the previous workshop, efforts by Member States and civil society groups to encourage timely action by the Council in situations where mass atrocities are being committed have gained increasing attention. One of those initiatives has been sponsored by France and Mexico, and another by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group. Should the Council or its permanent members consider any steps in that direction in 2016?
- Has the Council developed a workable and productive balance between how much attention it devotes to situation-specific issues compared with thematic or cross-cutting issues? Are any adjustments needed? Are the insights gained from its thematic and cross-cutting deliberations taken sufficiently into account in its consideration of specific situations?

Assessment of the performance of the Security Council in 2015

Many participants provided brief comments on how well the Security Council had been performing. In terms of the positive side of the ledger, one speaker cited resolutions 2118 (2013) concerning chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and 2199 (2015) on steps to curb material support to groups employing terrorism, as well as the unity that the Council had demonstrated in dealing with Iranian nuclear activities. According to the speaker, there had been a broad convergence of views on

counter-terrorism, one of the top priorities of the Council. The members had also taken a unified approach to some situations, such as in Burkina Faso and Guinea-Bissau, which had not been prominent on its agenda. In quiet ways, they had been able to encourage positive results in those situations. Another interlocutor agreed that the removal of chemical weapons from the Syrian Arab Republic constituted an important success, facilitated by the innovative joint inspection mechanism developed by the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. That could open a path towards greater accountability, as well as prevent future abuses with chemical weapons. There had been significant progress on some thematic issues as well. Under the women and peace and security heading, the Council had been able to meet with women who were making a difference by participating in actual peace processes. There had been some progress on the follow-up to resolution 1325 (2000), but the gender perspective had not yet been fully integrated into the deliberations of the Council and decisions on peacekeeping operations, or into its interactions with the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in those situations. The convergence of views on ISIL had led to several resolutions and statements, including on financing and the kidnapping or recruitment of young women, but there was much more work to be done on that front.

Commenting on the relevance of the Security Council, one participant contended that the situation was worse than the participants had thought, but that the possibilities for doing something about it were greater than they had realized. A second contributor remarked that, although it was arguable whether the glass was half full or half empty, the members of the Council seemed defensive, as if in the back of their minds they felt that they were failing. The worsening violence in the Syrian Arab Republic was evidence of an immediate failure, while the situation in the State of Palestine reflected a longer-term one. In both cases, there was reason to doubt the relevance of the Council. A third speaker agreed that there had been no movement on ending the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, while decades had elapsed without progress on the Palestinian question. The credibility of the United Nations, noted another speaker, had been diminished by the lack of effective action by the Council in those situations. The reality, commented another participant, was that the pressing problems of the Middle East were being addressed elsewhere because of the stagnation within the Council.

One speaker listed a series of conflicts in which the Council was not doing well: Yemen was an embarrassment; in Darfur, the peace operation was virtually under siege owing to a lack of cooperation from the Government; and Burundi was frustrating, in part because of the difficulty of sequencing and of securing needed regional cooperation. Although it was encouraging that there was an external political process that was beginning to look for a way forward in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Council was largely divorced from it. It also remained to be seen whether the Council could find something useful to say about the situation in the Middle East. One participant noted that at the workshop in 2014 some interlocutors had included Libya and Yemen on their lists of Council successes. Another speaker agreed that there had been a serious rollback in both situations. According to other participants, the Council had generally failed to address the root causes of conflicts, identify road maps out of conflict, gain a dynamic perspective on the distinct characteristics of each situation, obtain results on the ground following its decisions and exercise its primary responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of

international peace and security, rather than looking to the Secretary-General for the answers to such critical questions.

Many participants commented on the criteria, standards or benchmarks that should be used to measure the Council's performance. One suggested that its products should not be the only measure of its success. For instance, even the effort of drafting a resolution might have had some impact on those contemplating the use of barrel bombs in the Syrian Arab Republic, while the act of drafting a resolution would be better than nothing on the Middle East. A second interlocutor noted that the key to greater efficiency and effectiveness sometimes lay outside the Council itself, given how critical parallel processes could be for achieving the desired results in some situations. It was important, therefore, to look for synergies rather than to see other groups as competitors.

Several speakers suggested that the Council should be judged by the difference it made on the ground in resolving and managing conflicts. That should be the prime benchmark. There were more than 30 current conflicts, it was noted, and the Council should be assessed more on how well it handled them than on how extensively its working methods had been reformed. One speaker suggested that simple assessment measures be used, such as the magnitude of conflicts or the number of casualties they produced. As one interlocutor put it, the real impact that the Council made on the ground was the best metric, and that would entail making sure that its decisions were followed through. The Council, therefore, should be action-oriented, not just a debating club. Another speaker agreed that the world expected the Council to be action-oriented, but its record had been mixed on that score. That would require a moral compass and the exercise of moral leadership, along with more of a focus on problem-solving, rather than so much political posturing. One participant asserted that the Council should be evaluated in terms of the results of its actions, such as conflicts resolved or managed, yet more time was devoted to matters of internal efficiency than to its performance on the ground.

To meet its mandate under the Charter, the Council should be preventing conflicts, noted one speaker, as well as managing or resolving them. As a second participant put it, the members should be doing more to make the Council a place for taking proactive initiatives and for troubleshooting. A third speaker agreed that the Council had become too reactive, which was the path to failure. It was not enough for members to wait for situations to explode and then try to deal with the results. They should make more creative use of techniques, such as horizon scanning, that could identify opportunities for preventive action. Another speaker agreed, stating that members needed "to walk the talk" when it came to prevention.

There were two United Nations, claimed one participant: one that spoke about issues and one that produced change by doing something about them. Since the Council tended to be part of the former, it needed to make a greater effort to make tangible connections between its decisions and their implementation on the ground. However, according to another participant, it had become harder to measure results, as the functions of the Council had changed with the end of the Cold War and were in the process of changing again. Peace operations were being asked to fulfil a growing array of mandates, so it was more difficult to assess how they were performing. Stocktaking was further complicated, according to another speaker, because much of the critical conflict resolution efforts in major crises, such as those related to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ukraine and the Middle East, was taking

place among smaller and more flexible groups outside the Council. That was understandable, but it was not good to keep the Council perennially on the sidelines, given the role that it often had to play as the last train station during the diplomatic endgame.

One participant emphasized that it would be unrealistic to expect the Council to address all peace and security issues around the world, or all sources of instability. Nor should it be expected to be able to act by consensus on all matters at all times, despite efforts to find common ground. Another speaker agreed that, instead of expecting the Council to do everything everywhere, it would be better to focus on what it could do in specific situations to make things better. The goal should be to make the Council matter more in the real world. Although it might have been true that all things were related and that the wings of a butterfly on one side of the world could lead to a hurricane on the opposite side, that did not mean that the Council needed to follow every butterfly. According to a third speaker, it was easy to criticize or caricature the Council, but, with 30 or more conflicts occurring simultaneously, the task before it was huge. How much should be expected of it at any given point?

Several participants spoke of the sense of excitement and privilege they had found in serving on the Council. It was a unique place, on which one could serve both national and international interests. One speaker told of a father telling his son that the United Nations building was dedicated to stopping wars, another of the Norman Rockwell image of the peoples of the world standing behind representatives on the Security Council. The work should not just be about scoring points or being quoted favourably in capitals, because, as the Chef de Cabinet had stressed the night before, the lives of many people depended on the decisions and actions of the Council. Another participant responded that, despite all the idealism, the Council had frequently failed to live up to its mandate under the Charter. Too often, the Council reflected a divided world in which its deliberations proceeded slowly and representatives put national interests above global ones.

Challenges ahead

As in previous workshops, participants foresaw continuing challenges to the maintenance of international peace and security in Africa. Noting that as much as 70 per cent of the Council's attention was devoted to those matters, a speaker regretted that the Council had not received sufficient information or heard enough of African perspectives on those situations. The members should listen more to African voices. According to another speaker, it was sometimes difficult to represent the interests of Africa within the Council, given global geopolitical differences and divisions among Council members. When it came to addressing questions of human rights, justice and sanctions in different regions, the Council often employed a double standard. Mass atrocities had occurred all over the world and the principles governing them were universal, but the language of the Council was different for the Middle East, which was said to be "complicated", and for Africa, which the Council treated in a more prescriptive tone of "do this and do that". Africa was independent and would not accept diktats. Meetings between the Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union had been largely a formality, with communiqués drafted in advance. The approaches of the African Union towards Libya and Somalia, however, had been more promising than those adopted by the Security Council. Darfur was a continuing challenge, with more

thought needed as to what was being accomplished there and whether the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) should be renewed. It was not clear what was being accomplished by UNAMID, as the fighting among the factions and the attacks on civilian populations had not abated after a decade of the international presence. More generically, a speaker suggested that the Council needed to learn how to end sanctions regimes and peacekeeping operations. That was especially the case in Africa, which accounted for \$52 billion of the \$72 billion spent on United Nations peacekeeping since 2006, and where 80 per cent of United Nations peacekeepers were deployed. That would require having a better sense of conditions on the ground in those situations.

The Council continued to be confronted by enormous challenges in the Middle East as well. It was pointed out that there had been several constructive initiatives within the Council on the Syrian Arab Republic but that those had had to be put in a drawer once the diplomatic efforts in Vienna got under way. Given the divisions within the Council, it was widely believed that it would be better to proceed down parallel tracks. It was time to think outside the box on the Middle East, where any agreement would probably have to be reached outside the Council. A second speaker questioned whether the Council had lost its moral compass when it came to the Middle East. In terms of the Syrian Arab Republic, why were concerns about the sovereignty of the perpetrator always raised, rather than that of the suffering population or of neighbouring countries, such as Jordan and Lebanon, facing floods of refugees? They were faced by enormous burdens, as were European countries, but the leaders who had created the situation were protected in the Council by vetoes. Many members of the Council had had to struggle to gain their sovereignty, so they understood the need to protect it, but in this case claims of sovereignty were being exploited to prevent accountability.

A third continuing challenge was posed by non-State armed groups, especially those that employed the tactics of terror against populations. A participant urged that the members devote some fresh, even out-of-the-box, thinking as to how to handle that threat. The Council had developed a range of products for countering ISIL, including sanctions on its oil production, curbs on its efforts to kidnap people for ransom and restrictions on the flow of terrorist fighters. There had been some notable successes, but the threat from ISIL and other groups was ever-present. The effort to find more effective ways to crack down on ISIL finances posed a huge challenge. There was a need, more generally, to find more effective methods for enforcing counter-terrorist provisions that were already on the books. A second speaker stressed that thinking about terrorism had evolved substantially since the attacks of 9/11 and the adoption of resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1373 (2001). Only in resolution 1566 (2004) had the Council begun to address a possible definition of terrorism. It was, in part, a question of whether a group should be considered terrorist because of what it did or who it was. ISIL and Al-Qaida were undoubtedly terrorist groups, but the Council had been depending more on political than legal criteria to make such determinations. That had posed some issues for those providing humanitarian assistance in the Syrian Arab Republic, as the lack of references to international humanitarian law in Council decisions had made it more difficult to determine whether they could deal directly with some of the groups on the ground. Since counter-terrorism had become one of the Council's primary concerns, it was time to give greater thought to the legal dimensions of those matters.

One participant contended that some thematic issues, such as women and peace and security, should also be treated as pressing challenges on the Council's agenda. There was a tendency to focus on immediate hotspots without paying sufficient attention to the larger peace and security context. For instance, ISIL had been trying to target younger women, some of whom seemed to be attracted to the ISIL narrative. It was important to gain a better understanding of that relationship and of how to overcome the alienation that seemed to fuel it. The training and indoctrination of children in ISIL-held territory was a related concern with long-term implications. According to another participant, there had been no shortage of meetings of the Council devoted to women and peace and security, but little progress had resulted from all the talk. There remained a pressing need to integrate themes and perspectives relating to women and peace and security into the work of the Council across the board. Few women were included in Council deliberations and fewer still in key negotiations outside the Council. More thematic meetings without effective follow-up were not the answer. It was time for the Council to "talk the talk and walk the walk" on women and peace and security.

As several participants noted, gaining early, full and reliable information on dynamic developments on the ground remained a challenge to effective preventive action. However, as one participant pointed out, Council members were flooded with a virtual tsunami of information from a variety of sources. The volume of reports, letters, cables and e-mails had become overwhelming, but the members continued to request more briefings and reports from the Secretariat. Before the digital age and the expansion of the Council's agenda, it had been easier to concentrate attention on a narrower range of items. In recent years, even as the members of the Council had gained access to more information, their exchanges had become less interactive and more formal. According to a second speaker, the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat had done a good job of bringing emerging conflicts to the attention of the Council, such as sectarianism and unrest in Burundi, Maldives and Nepal, the threat posed by Boko Haram and possible violence as elections approached in Myanmar. A third speaker commented that, nevertheless, the members of the Council still did not have enough current information on what was happening on the ground in some places. There remained a gap in that regard. However, another participant noted that the gap had been even wider in the 1990s, when discussions in the Council about Cambodia and the former Yugoslavia had borne little relationship to what was actually happening on the ground.

In order to prevent the escalation of conflicts and to protect civilian populations, it was suggested that the Council should work more closely with regional and subregional organizations. In that regard, it could be more proactive in providing authorization for the deployment of regional and subregional forces and in providing funding to support them in such circumstances. Another speaker commented that the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General could be very helpful, both in providing timely information for Council deliberations and in turning Council decisions into effective action on the ground. They were challenged in some situations, however, in trying to maintain the consent of the relevant Government for their work while dealing with non-State armed groups to the extent necessary. The members of the Council, according to a third participant, needed to be more introspective not only about working methods but also about early warning. It was not enough to talk about human rights and how much more often they

featured in Council deliberations. There needed to be broader recognition that severe human rights violations were often harbingers of conflict and should not be left to the Human Rights Council alone. Recently, the Security Council seemed to be engaged less systematically in human rights matters. Another participant remarked that the Charter, even in Chapter VI, had not been very specific about which tools should be employed to prevent conflict, leaving the Council to try different measures and techniques over time. Its record of success in conflict prevention had, however, been limited over the years.

Finding consensus within the Council remained a challenge, it was suggested, because views among the members differed as to its proper role and functions. It should not be used for domestic political purposes or as a place for propaganda. However, it could not ignore international geopolitical considerations. There was instability in different parts of the world, and the principles of international law had not always been respected. Although all the members preferred consensus, at times achieving it required them to make real sacrifices and compromises. There needed to be a more concerted effort to keep private consultations out of the public eye, just as the public had to wait to see the white smoke from the Vatican when a new pope was being chosen. New members should understand that the pursuit of consensus within the Council would be in the interests of all members and of the Council as an institution. A second interlocutor reminded the participants that Article 1 (4) of the Charter stated that the world body was to be “a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations” to attain common ends, so that there needed to be some limits on sovereignty for the sake of advancing collective action through the Council. Sometimes it seemed that members had forgotten that key provision, and it would be a challenge to restore the centrality of that core purpose.

Sharpening tools

It was noted that three of the principal tools at the disposal of the Council, namely sanctions, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, were receiving increasing scrutiny. As one speaker put it, sanctions should be perceived as a tool, not as a goal in themselves. They had worked best when backed by strong regional cooperation. Another participant pointed out that, even when the Council had not been at the centre of international negotiations, as with the Islamic Republic of Iran, its employment of sanctions had made a critical difference in bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion. The proper question was not whether sanctions worked, but how they could be employed, along with other measures, such as mediation, dialogue and peacekeeping, to coerce, constrain or persuade parties to act in ways that helped to implement Council decisions. There was a need to gauge how such combinations of measures, including incentives and disincentives, could make a difference. It was essential, commented another participant, to look not only at the Council toolbox but also at how individual tools had been employed and whether they had been the right tool for each circumstance. Sanctions, for instance, could be helpful in achieving the desired results in some situations, but sometimes they had not been lifted, even when circumstances on the ground had changed. In a number of situations, it had proved easier to impose sanctions than to lift them. In general, the Council needed to fine-tune its tools, as well as how and when they were to be employed.

In terms of peacekeeping operations, several speakers urged that reporting cycles be rationalized. As one put it, it was a waste of time to have 90-, 60- or even

30-day reports written into peacekeeping mandates. Participants noted that reporting had, at times, dominated the Council's monthly agenda. Peacekeeping reports could fill a monthly programme of work, leaving little room for the President to introduce new elements. One speaker commented that this should have been a quick fix, so why had it not happened? Likewise, another interlocutor pointed out that there had been calls at past workshops to include the Chairs of Peacebuilding Commission country configurations in relevant deliberations of the Council, but that had not taken place. One participant underscored the concomitant importance of economic and social development efforts, particularly in the light of the chronic underpledging that had been seen in so many crisis situations. According to another speaker, the effectiveness and expense of peacekeeping operations had been raised more frequently because some missions seemed to go on forever. In parts of Africa, they had been asked to take on much of the infrastructure maintenance and repair normally associated with peacebuilding. That was among the reasons for policies on peacekeeping and peacebuilding to be more fully integrated. Another participant suggested that the tens of billions of dollars expended on peacekeeping, especially in Africa, might have been better spent on development efforts. At the very least, the Council needed to enhance the engagement of troop-contributing countries in its deliberations. Too often, the members had not been well informed about what was happening on the ground, so there was a critical gap in knowledge that needed to be filled.

The Council should seek more regular collaboration with regional arrangements, it was argued, as the pursuit of parallel tracks had provided greater flexibility and, at times, better results. Different actors were critical in different situations. Increasingly, the maintenance of international peace and security had required the engagement of the African Union and the European Union. Likewise, démarches from the Council, whether through regional organizations, the President, or members of the Council from the region, had proved to be highly effective in a number of situations, such as Yemen and Darfur. According to another speaker, the situation in Burundi underscored the need for productive and timely collaboration with regional arrangements, but the question was how to achieve that. The meetings between the Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union tended to be overly formulaic, and both bodies were frustrated by the institutional dance steps that they had to follow.

Two participants called for more frequent field trips by the members of the Council to give them a fuller and more direct sense of the situation on the ground and to permit engagement with local parties and actors. Without occasional visits, it was easy to lose sight of how conditions were changing in dynamic situations, such as in Yemen, where the Council should plan a visit. Another participant pointed out that a mission to Yemen had been proposed but that some members had objected. Nevertheless, it was important to get away from the safety and distance that New York offered and to gauge conditions on the ground. In principle, those who were causing the trouble should pay for such visits by the Council. A fourth interlocutor noted that the Council had visited Burundi and the Central African Republic but that it was not evident whether much had changed as a result. Although a mission to Yemen could be considered, perhaps it was time to plan a trip to the State of Palestine instead.

In the view of one participant, the number of reports requested from the Secretary-General by the Council was "crazy". No one could read them all.

Members had to show more restraint in that regard. Briefings from the Secretariat should be shorter and more focused. Another speaker noted that it was essential not to let all of that extra data weigh down the members. The additional information should be embraced and put to good use in the work of the Council. One speaker suggested that it would be useful for the Secretary-General to include, on a more regular basis, policy options in his reports, rather than leaving it solely to the members to deduce what those might be, given the data and analysis he had presented. Briefings on human rights and humanitarian matters, asserted another participant, had injected fresh oxygen into Council deliberations, offering important insights into the human cost of conflict and raising issues, such as health and education, which would otherwise be overlooked. Another speaker agreed that such injections of oxygen had been much needed at points, as the Council should not ignore the human suffering and human rights violations that had often been associated with conflict.

In the view of one participant, open debates belonged to the eighteenth century. No one should be expected to sit as over 100 representatives spoke over the course of two days. There were better ways to communicate in the digital age. It was time to get back to fundamentals. Informal consultations were too rigid. It was too difficult to bring in outside actors, such as the Chairs of Peacebuilding Commission configurations, into Council deliberations. Everything tended to be “pre-cooked” in informal consultations. They tasted like pre-cooked meals, lacked creativity and decided nothing. The Council did not use its time efficiently and productively. It could be seized of an important issue for years without doing anything. Sometimes, it seemed as if a meeting was being held for its own sake, because some expert had determined that a particular matter should be taken up on a particular day or somebody wanted to brief the Council. The Council should be more action-oriented, including in how it allocated its time. Stake-outs had been poorly attended for the most part. Everyone knew that the best meetings were the breakfasts at the beginning of each month and those on the item “any other business”, because they had no set agenda and no prepared papers or scripts. Arria formula meetings also tended to be more productive, as they were more informal and flexible. The bottom line was that the Council needed to be better informed, more informal, more flexible, more outcome-oriented and more demanding about measuring outcomes. Otherwise, it was likely that the Council’s reputation would suffer and parallel processes would prove more successful at fulfilling its core functions.

One participant acknowledged that the daily grind of Council work could be wearing, given its inefficiencies, frustrations and formulaic exchanges. The latter needed to be more informal and more interactive, although the need to heed instructions from capitals would inevitably restrict flexibility to some extent. On the other hand, Arria formula sessions had brought fresh oxygen into Council deliberations, providing new information and new ways to look at existing information. The use of such sessions had been increasing over the years on such issues as the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, human rights, the targeting by ISIL of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals, and chemical weapons. It was to be hoped that some of that fresh oxygen would find its way into Council consultations. In the view of another participant, the arrangements for Council work that had been built up over many years inhibited creativity. The Council should examine which of its established procedures were inhibiting the achievement of the

goals of becoming more assertive and productive in the pursuit of international peace and security. According to a third speaker, the goal was to make the Council less rigid, more flexible, more informal, more interactive and more transparent and to look more in the long term in terms of its outlook. Moreover, with a declining number of female permanent representatives, the Council needed to become more diverse, as diversity tended to make organizations stronger. Was there a way for the Council to compensate for the lack of diversity? In terms of specific steps, a way should be found to circulate statements rather than to read them. It was ridiculous to sit in an open debate for more than one day. There should be an effort to strip unnecessary items out of the agenda, while making fuller use of discussions under “any other business” and Arria formula sessions. The bar to adding items should remain very high, and delegations should be wary of adding meetings that were not going to be well attended by permanent representatives.

Tweeting from within the consultation room needed to stop, commented one participant. There had been times when a delegate had been attacked for what had been said in informal consultations before even leaving the room. Another participant agreed that the tweeting needed to stop and that more innovative ways of interacting were needed. A system could be established in which mobile phones would be turned off and assistants asked to leave the consultation room for an agreed period of 30-45 minutes. Such a step could reinforce confidentiality and enhance interactivity.

One participant declared that there were too many open debates within the Council. Their growing number, especially on thematic issues, raised questions about priorities and use of time. Some thematic questions, such as the evolution of international norms, had long-term strategic importance, but too much time had been spent on open debates within the Council. The value added of such debates should be considered from a pragmatic perspective. In addition, there had been problems with the way in which informal consultations had been conducted. They should be employed for solving problems, not for making dramatic statements and declarations. According to another speaker, the growing number of open meetings was a sign of progress. So too was the increase in the number of unanimous resolutions. At the same time, it needed to be borne in mind that agreement on resolutions and press statements would not necessarily halt the killing in acute crises. Noting the broad agreement at the workshop on a range of measures to improve the way in which the Council went about its work, such as making consultations more informal and interactive, reviewing reporting cycles and taking away cell phones during consultations, a participant asked what was preventing the members of the Council from implementing such seemingly simple steps.

One speaker commented that a dozen years ago the roles of political coordinators and pen holders did not exist. They were relatively new, and quite important, innovations in the life of the Council. Pen holders did a magnificent job: they were knowledgeable, alert to the dynamics of a situation, proactive and willing to take the initiative when necessary. However, they had sometimes discouraged others from thinking creatively or from taking initiatives, and they should make clearer at the outset what course they planned to take. Another speaker called for a review of the pen holder system, as a task could become routine when one has performed it for too long a period. In some cases, it would be useful to have two pen holders, with one of them from the region under consideration. Consideration could also be given to having a troika instead of a single member serving as the monthly

President of the Council. Delays in Council action, noted a speaker, could cost lives on the ground. That was reason enough to move forward with steps to make the Council more efficient and responsive. As another participant put it, it was much easier to block things in the Council than to make them happen. Members needed to consider both how to achieve and preserve unity and how to avoid actions that would prevent consensus. In the view of another participant, the Council acted as a body composed of two classes of members, as 5 plus 10, with the 10 acting as assistants. It was time for members to change their ways of thinking and acting in the Council. Another speaker commented on the surprising degree of cordiality among the delegates serving on the Council.

Session II

Working methods and subsidiary bodies

Moderator

Ambassador Ismael A. Gaspar Martins
Permanent Representative of Angola

Commentators

Ambassador François Delattre
Permanent Representative of France

Ambassador Gerard van Bohemen
Permanent Representative of New Zealand

The agenda for session II contained the following questions:

- In terms of working methods, undoubtedly the most prominent and contentious issue in 2016 will be the process by which the Council decides whom to recommend to the General Assembly as the next Secretary-General. In the recent Council debate on working methods, the President of the General Assembly drew attention to elements of Assembly resolution 69/321, calling for a much closer process of collaboration than in the past between the Presidents of the Assembly and the Council in soliciting candidates for the position, in circulating names and curricula vitae of individual candidates to all Member States and in organizing informal dialogues or meetings with candidates, all with a view to increasing the transparency and inclusivity of the process.
 - Such steps would be a major departure from past practice. Would they be consistent with Article 97 of the Charter and with the institutional relationships between the Council and the Assembly established by the Charter and developed over the years?
 - The Assembly has not acted to revise or rescind resolution 11 (I) of 1946, which reflected the recommendations of the Preparatory Commission. Paragraph 4 (d) of that resolution states: “It would be desirable for the Security Council to proffer one candidate only for the consideration of the General Assembly, and for debate on the nomination in the General Assembly to be avoided. Both nomination and appointment should be discussed at private meetings, and a vote in either the Security Council or the General Assembly, if taken, should be by secret ballot.” Would it be

possible to craft a revised nomination process that would be consistent with the recommendations of resolutions 11 (I) and 69/321?

- Given the monthly rotation of the Presidency of the Council, how could continuity be achieved in the collaborative process recommended in resolution 69/321? During the recent debate on working methods, some members of the Council suggested that it had been slow to take up the necessary engagement between the Presidents of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.
- In resolution 69/321, some qualities that should be sought in the next Secretary-General are suggested. Is that a matter that should be discussed by the members of the Council? If so, how might such a discussion be organized?
- Some Member States, and the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, have called for set timetables for nominations to be submitted and the appointment process completed, in order to ensure a transition period of between three and six months. Would that be wise and realistic?
- For more than a dozen years, the “Hitting the ground running” workshops have offered an opportunity for current and incoming members of the Council both to float new ideas for improving its working methods and to assess progress on implementing steps agreed at previous workshops. Among the measures that have been widely endorsed at recent workshops are the following:
 - Making informal consultations more informal, more consultative and more interactive, for instance by posing questions to briefers and by clustering interventions, among others. How could those efforts be made more sustainable? Would a note by the President be helpful in that regard?
 - Opening up the pen holder system to permit wider participation by non-permanent members, perhaps by having two pen holders for some issues. A note by the President of 14 April 2014 ([S/2014/268](#)) sounded quite promising in that regard. However, a comparison of the lists of pen holders for 2014 and 2015 suggests that progress in that area has been limited. Is that true and, if so, why? What additional steps might be taken to encourage more diversity among the pen holders? Would any of the newly elected members be interested in sharing such responsibilities with another member?
 - Making the process of determining the chairs of subsidiary bodies more transparent, interactive and timely. A note by the President of 5 June 2014 ([S/2014/393](#)) described an earlier, more regular and more interactive process for appointing the Chairs of subsidiary bodies and for transferring responsibilities from the outgoing to the incoming Chair. Has the revised system been working satisfactorily? Are further refinements or steps needed?
 - On 4 August 2014, a note by the President ([S/2014/565](#)) declared that the members had agreed “to continue to enhance dialogue among all Council members, in particular in crisis or fast-evolving situations, so that the

Council may respond more efficiently and therefore better fulfil its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security". Has that led to improved communications among members of the Council, permanent and non-permanent, when dangerous threats to international peace and security are emerging? Are further steps needed?

- More broadly, have the measures set out in the note by the President of 26 July 2010 (S/2010/507) been fully implemented? Are there steps that have been agreed but not yet carried out consistently in practice?
- At the recent debate on working methods, a member of the Council mentioned that "we have fostered increased dialogue among permanent representatives on the Council's working methods, including a monthly meeting to discuss how we work together on the issues ahead of us". Has that become a regular practice? Could such meetings provide a venue for a sustainable dialogue on how to advance those and other reforms to Council working methods?
- During that debate and at past workshops, there has been much discussion of ways to enhance the Council's relationships and communications with other intergovernmental bodies and the wider United Nations membership. Over the past two decades, a number of steps have been taken to improve transparency and, to a lesser extent, inclusiveness, but the perception appears to be widespread that the Council remains largely a closed shop. Is that perception simply endemic to the structure of the Council and the nature of its work, or could further steps be taken towards greater transparency and inclusiveness? Ironically, has the push towards more frequent open debates led to unintended consequences by making them more formalistic exercises with little effect on core decision-making in the Council, which will inevitably be conducted in private?
- Also during the debate, some members questioned whether subsidiary bodies should always have to act by consensus. Should that practice be reviewed? In general, are the Council's subsidiary bodies functioning well?
- Two points are widely acknowledged: (a) that the Council has proved to be the most adaptable intergovernmental body in the United Nations; and (b) that more progress on refining working methods is still needed. The latter point stems, in part, from the dynamic nature of the Council's work, which has become more complex, layered and differentiated in response to the changing nature of the threats to international peace and security. That raises several questions about the future course of reform of working methods in the Council. What should be the ultimate objective of such reform efforts? Are there practical or constitutional limits to how far such reforms should go? How should the benefits of reform be weighed against possible effects on the effectiveness and efficiency of the work of the Council? To what extent has the lack of parallel reform progress in other principal organs inhibited the impact and sustainability of the reforms undertaken by the Council?

Assessment and goals of the reform of working methods

One participant asserted that the Council had proved to be the most adaptable intergovernmental body in the United Nations system, which was a good thing. Observers did not always appreciate how hard the members of the Council, who had

become virtual workaholics, had to work. Whether working harder was equivalent to working better, however, was less certain. That was the challenge for the reform of the working methods. Over time, there had been a number of positive elements and other things that needed to be improved. A second speaker suggested that there had been a lot of promising ideas in various notes by the President but that there was a need to review carefully which of those agreed steps had been fully and consistently implemented. How much had working methods actually changed? In any case, the recent open debate on the Council's working methods had been quite productive. According to another interlocutor, the Council had come a long way in reforming its working methods. There had been some real improvements, but not everything had been improved, and some of the forward steps had not yet been institutionalized. Another participant contended that the Council was one of the more conservative bodies in the United Nations system, with provisional rules of procedure that were adopted almost 70 years ago. Another responded that the Council was conservative in some respects but a place that encouraged innovation in other ways. The incoming members should dare to innovate when opportunities arose. It would be reasonable to try to update the note by the President of 26 July 2010 (S/2010/507), but more could be done with what already existed or without writing things down at all.

The core question, it was suggested, was how to fix the Security Council. Only its members could accomplish that, and it was their responsibility. The Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions had been addressing precisely that question, and six members of the Council had joined together to make a joint statement to the recent open debate on the working methods of the Council. That was a significant innovation. The open debate had increased the transparency and inclusiveness of the Council, as it allowed significant input from non-members of the Council. Time had shown that the reform of the working methods could improve the work of the Council. The goal of improving the working methods should therefore be to put the Council in a better place to resolve conflict, not just to manage it. Its mode of operation had been oriented to the latter, not the former, most of the time. Furthermore, it should become more engaged in conflict prevention and make that one of the essential tools of its work.

As another speaker put it, it was a privilege to serve on the Council, a role that carried a huge responsibility for each member. Its work required a sense of gravitas, as the state of the world and the consequences of its actions demanded more than an attitude of "business as usual". The members had a responsibility to advance global interests and to forge a unity of purpose whenever possible. The common thread in reform efforts had to be value added, impact and sustainable solutions to common challenges. The workshop organized by the Government of Finland had been very helpful in moving the process forward, the Security Council Report had brought valuable new ideas to the table for a decade and the Security Council Affairs Division had played an important role in helping members to overcome divisions. As the reform process moved forward, two objectives should be borne in mind. One was to enhance the capacity of the Council to contribute to conflict prevention and to integrate prevention more fully into its working methods. Burundi would be a challenge, in that regard, in the coming year. The second was to achieve greater efficiency, as quick decisions were needed when lives were at stake. Efficiency would not flow from the provisional rules of procedure, but rather from how flexibly and pragmatically they were employed. The two initiatives on veto restraint

in the case of mass atrocities underscored a growing understanding that the veto was a responsibility, not a privilege. Preventing mass atrocities was at the heart of the Council's mandate and purposes. The essence of reform was promoting common ground and meeting the responsibilities that come with Council membership.

Changing the culture within the Council, it was posited by one participant, was as important as changing the rules. Over time, it had become increasingly evident that there were limits to how effective the Council could be at prevention. The Secretariat and the Peacebuilding Commission were often better placed to prevent conflict, so reform efforts might better focus on effectiveness than prerogatives and on how to work with the United Nations system as a whole. In the view of another interlocutor, the goals of reforming the working methods should be to make the Council more efficient, more active and more proactive. A third speaker suggested that there should be a concerted effort to streamline the Council's outputs, such as statements by the President of the Council and press statements, so that they appeared more homogeneous and user-friendly. The goal was to keep the Council appearing relevant and not too technical, so that observers would have no difficulty understanding what was at stake. According to another participant, it had been the 10 elected members that had pushed hardest for the reform of the working methods, as they were on the Council for just two years and wanted it to be as active and effective as possible during their term. In that regard, the note by the President of 26 July 2010 (S/2010/507) had been quite useful, although efforts should be made to try to improve it.

Meetings

It was pointed out that the number of consultations had been rising, in part because of the growing use of the "any other business" item on the agenda. The use of open and thematic debates was also growing, as was the number of speakers at those debates, but they could be ritualistic at times. The large number of communications and reports from the Secretary-General requested by the Council constituted a considerable expense, as did visits undertaken by the Council or its sanctions committees. There was no budget provision for the missions undertaken by the Council itself, only for the sanctions committees. The members should bear in mind the financial cost of the activities undertaken by the Council. According to one participant, Council missions and the ad hoc notes circulated by the Secretariat had often been very useful in terms of providing information and impressions that went well beyond what could be found in formal reports. Some of the latter could be more concise.

In the view of one speaker, it had been a good practice to have informal consultations produce informal products, such as stake-outs and press statements, which demonstrated the unity of the Council in reacting to real-time events. Open debates had been useful when they were well calibrated, such as on Council working methods or reviewing progress on implementing resolution 1325 (2000); however, they should not be held too frequently. Discussions on "any other business" had tended to be more focused and efficient than consultations. The emerging practice of holding a breakfast meeting at the beginning of the month for permanent representatives only was quite promising, as they provided a privileged moment for interactive discussion. There had been some very good wrap-up and Arria formula sessions. The latter added relevance and provided a bridge to the outside world.

One participant commented that there was still too much reading of texts during consultations, and delegates rarely listened to each other. Sometimes, a delegate came in just to read a text and then left afterwards. If they did not listen to each other, there would be no basis for collaboration. The same formality and lack of dialogue had come to characterize meetings with troop- and police-contributing countries, force commanders and police commissioners, and representatives of regional organizations. There was little real dialogue on the issues troubling them.

Regarding Arria formula sessions, it was said that there should be more of them because they offered a means of bringing in additional voices and expertise but that in most cases they had been organized for political purposes. Important issues, such as Darfur, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic, should be addressed by the Council as a whole and not just from a national point of view. According to another speaker, the purpose of convening Arria formula meetings had been to bring additional information to Council deliberations, but the mechanism was being abused. It was expensive to hold those additional sessions, and that should be borne in mind when deciding whether to hold them.

The same speaker said that there had also been some questions about how “any other business” had been used. At times, the agenda had been overburdened, as some members had pressed the President to add “any other business” to an already busy agenda. In one case, the President had had to refuse an urgent meeting with a force commander because of lack of time. At other points, there had also been concerns about how the President had represented the Council at the stake-out and questions as to whether some press statements had made any difference. In the view of another participant, the use of “any other business” had been a positive development. If some delegations did not feel prepared and wanted more advance notice, then the discussion could be delayed in some cases. However, one of the potential advantages of a discussion on “any other business” was to offer an opportunity for more off-the-cuff exchanges.

The recent innovation of holding a breakfast only for permanent representatives at the beginning of the month had been well received, it was noted, and it appeared that the practice would be continued. It had allowed a relatively open and informal exchange of views to which Council members looked forward. According to another participant, the intention had not been to replace bilateral consultations, but it was useful for everyone to hear from the President at the same time. That same format could be used for other purposes when there was a need to understand each other better and to have a keener sense of where things were going.

Process, procedures and practices

Many participants had questions or comments about the processes for selecting pen holders and Chairs of subsidiary bodies. It was pointed out that the pen holder system was a relatively recent innovation. The permanent members, by serving as pen holders on most issues, had relieved the burden on the non-permanent members. It would be counterproductive, however, for any single member to treat an issue as its private domain in which it could advance a national point of view on the matter. Matters before the Council should be addressed in a businesslike, problem-solving manner from as broad a perspective as possible, without being limited by any prerogatives of the pen holder. As another speaker expressed it, pen holders did not own an issue; the Council as a whole did. The goal should be to get as many

members as possible engaged in trying to find solutions to the challenges the Council had to face. According to a third speaker, it was understandable that pen holders had some sense of ownership. On the whole, they did a great job and provided an important service for the Council and its mission, but it would make sense to encourage the notion of two pen holders, wherever such arrangements were feasible. For instance, the utilization of two pen holders on several situations in Africa and on humanitarian questions related to the war in the Syrian Arab Republic had worked well. It was bound to be helpful to be able to engage with and receive contributions from additional members of the Council on a given issue.

One participant recalled that, at the most recent workshop, someone had commented that if the responsibilities of two pen holders were not carried out properly, it could be like two surgeons operating simultaneously. Another speaker commented that it was less a question of who held the pen than of how that member held it. If there was transparency and engagement by the members, then there was room for innovation and flexibility about such things. True, there had been cases in which two pen holders had worked well together, but if their respective interests diverged, such an arrangement was unlikely to succeed. That should be considered carefully on a case-by-case basis. One participant agreed that it was a matter of how, not who. Another interlocutor underscored the importance of who held the pen, as there had been a tendency to assign the pen on African questions to members with a past history on the continent, which was unfortunate. It was very important that members from Africa hold or share the pen on African issues, because otherwise the pen holder might not take into account African perspectives on some of those matters. Another participant agreed that African ownership and perspectives did matter and the notion of two pen holders made good sense, in part as a way of catching mistakes. Concurring with the view that it was good practice to look for African solutions to African problems, one speaker suggested that members of the Council from Africa make it clear to other members when they wanted to serve as pen holder on a particular matter. Another participant commented that the ultimate objective was to make the work of pen holders as effective as possible.

In principle, it was noted, the notion of seeking two pen holders was a good idea and well worth exploring. It would be a mistake, however, for a member to accept that responsibility as a way to advance its national interests on a particular matter. In fact, pen holders tended to find that it was harder to forward their national perspectives when undertaking that responsibility. A member from Africa with a strong national interest in a particular issue might not be a good candidate to assume the role of pen holder on that question. Another speaker agreed, since members with a strong vested interest in a situation were not well placed to serve as pen holder. On the other hand, however, the Council needed to overcome a postcolonial pattern of selecting pen holders for African matters that did not augur well for its effectiveness or reputation.

Among the issues regarding working methods before the Council at that point, one participant mentioned the selection of the Chairs of subsidiary bodies. That should be accomplished more quickly in future to avoid disrupting the important ongoing work of those bodies. Another participant commented that maintaining the continuity of the work of those bodies was important, so the selection process needed to run more smoothly. According to another interlocutor, a new process was needed for the selection of the Chairs of subsidiary bodies, particularly the sanctions committees. There was nothing that newly elected members objected to

more than being told to chair a given subsidiary body without prior consultation. The revised schedule for electing new Council members should permit significant improvements in the current system, for instance by permitting the President to begin informal consultations with new members several months before the end of the year about their preferences and what each Chair position demanded. There should be plenty of time to work those questions out satisfactorily and in an open and interactive manner. Leading a sanctions committee was demanding and time-consuming work that was not for everyone. There was a need for a more candid conversation within the Council and with newly elected members about what those assignments would require in terms of time and staffing.

One participant commented that there was a lack of transparency on how the positions of Chairs of committees were allocated, and the voice of the elected members needed to be heard. There should be a real give-and-take discussion of those questions, and the earlier it began, the better. It was particularly important for the stewardship of the sanctions committees. Another participant commented that chairing those groups could be both demanding and frustrating but that they also offered opportunities for learning and for making a difference. It was important, whichever subsidiary bodies were assigned to one's delegation, to give them a chance and to not let the initial frustrations define the experience.

One speaker declared that there must be a better way to allocate the positions of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies. The existing system of having one of the permanent members facilitate the process on behalf of the other four provided no opportunity for input from the newly elected members or transparency. In one case, the newly elected member first heard about the results from a website and did not accept the assignments, and those committees did not meet for a year. Instead, there should be a meeting with all the newly elected members, and the matter should be decided three months in advance. The question of which assignments were given higher or lower priority should not be based on the issues in which the permanent members happened to be interested. If members were asked to chair groups they were interested in, then their motivation to succeed would be that much higher. A speaker responded that it was usually impossible for every incoming member to get all of their preferred assignments and, in the case cited, the newly elected member did get its first choice of a working group.

One participant suggested that a more transparent process was needed, one that would allow full consultation and be guided by a more explicit set of criteria and credentials. Those seeking to head a particular body should list their credentials and give a sense of their plans for it, while current members should provide a better sense of what their expectations were for the committee and its Chair. In the view of another speaker, it appeared that the note of the President regarding that process, which stressed a prompter and more open process, was not being followed. The selection of Chairs of subsidiary bodies had been discussed at earlier workshops, which had been identified as a venue to help facilitate the process, but nothing had been heard at the current workshop about specific steps forward. It would be important to have the opportunity to attend meetings of the committees before the start of the term. It was puzzling, moreover, that none of the subsidiary bodies were chaired by any of the five permanent members. Chairing a subsidiary body created an enormous workload and should be shared among non-permanent and permanent members.

It was pointed out that there had been a time when permanent members chaired some of those bodies. Some speakers recalled, however, that non-permanent members had objected. In terms of participating in committee meetings, the newly elected members would be invited to attend any and all of them for the remainder of the year. Another speaker commented that it was striking that the non-permanent members first pushed the permanent members from those positions and then wanted to push them back. Whatever the history, the allocation process needed a serious review by all the members of the Council. It was wrong to assign committee responsibilities to members that did not have an appetite for them, especially since it had been apparent that Chairs could make a positive difference when they were properly motivated. There were many examples to that effect.

It was noted that the appointment of the Secretary-General under a modified process would be one of the critical tests of the Council's working methods in the coming year. It was a decision that would be important to all members of the Council and would demand hard work from each of them. Regular consultations would be needed well before any straw polls were taken. Noting that the background paper for the workshop had stated that the nomination of the Secretary-General was one of the biggest decisions to be made by the Council in the coming year, one participant discussed the next steps in that process and suggested that the Office of the President of the General Assembly was quite far along on its side of the process. The Council had some catching up to do, and there would be a real effort to reach out to new members. The job of the Council would be to get the nomination right, and that of the General Assembly would be to get the decision right. Early on, the Council should consider what the job specifications should be and what qualities would be needed to meet them. One interlocutor commented that it would be important to try to make that decision as early as possible. Another noted that the current process would be quite different from when the present Secretary-General was first appointed in 2006.

It was pointed out that some collective attention should be given to the implications of the earlier election of the incoming members of the Council in 2016. That would permit them to have a longer period to prepare for their terms on the Council. They should be invited both to consultations and to meetings of subsidiary bodies. Another participant proposed that newly elected members be given a full 90 days — October, November and December — to participate in the activities of the Council in advance of joining it. That would give them ample opportunity to “hit the ground running” in January, particularly if the determination of who would be chairing which subsidiary body were made early on. Another speaker agreed that extra time would permit the accumulation of information and the learning of procedures well before January but that, again, early committee assignments would be most important. Another participant agreed that this would be the most consequential dimension of the 90-day proposal.

Resolutions and statements by the President of the Council tended to be too long, too technical and insufficiently focused, it was said. Although correcting those flaws had proved to be easier said than done, each member of the Council had a responsibility to try to make progress in that direction in the coming year. So-called “Christmas tree resolutions” should be avoided, as they contained too many mandates that lacked priority or sequencing and were frequently unrealistic. In that regard, the Council should pay attention to the feedback from the field. In the view of one speaker, the non-permanent members were particularly likely to contribute to

the Christmas tree effect. Part of the problem, for permanent and non-permanent members alike, was that permanent representatives rarely entered into the negotiation of texts until late in the game, leaving that to the expert level. Ambassadors should learn to question why certain provisions were included, such as extensive preambles to sanctions resolutions. That was part of their responsibilities.

Another participant agreed that Christmas tree resolutions were indeed a serious problem. They were too technical and insufficiently political. Often they included agreed language from previous resolutions, because drafters found it easy to add. However, to people outside the Council, the purpose of such extensive and complicated language was not always evident. There was no instruction book on how to draft a good resolution, noted one interlocutor, but experts needed to be taught how to do it. It could be hard to trim draft texts, as various members would defend their favourite paragraphs quite strongly.

One speaker agreed that the drafting process for resolutions and statements by the President needed to be improved, in part because the existing process reinforced the conservative tendencies in the work of the Council. When an expert wanted to reject fresh language, the reason commonly given was that “it was not agreed language”. That approach stifled creativity and adaptability to evolving situations. The members should look carefully at the whole drafting process.

According to one participant, most Security Council practices were determined by convention, not by rules, allowing some degree of informality in the way in which the Council went about its work, but precedent and formality mostly reigned in the Chamber. Over time, sanctions committees had adopted overly strict rules of procedure, making things that should be simple, such as the Chair sending a letter, subject to a no-objection rule. The most productive meetings of some subsidiary bodies, in the view of one interlocutor, were the most informal ones, perhaps held at the Permanent Mission of the Chair, at which all members could compare notes about how things were developing and where they wanted the group to go. To ease the transition from one President to another, one participant suggested that consideration be given to adopting a troika system.

Partners and outreach

It was time, in the view of one speaker, to translate the principle of collaboration with regional and subregional arrangements into more practical and feasible steps. The Council had made a number of forward-looking statements on the topic, but they had largely not been acted upon. That needed to change, beginning with the Council’s relationship with the African Union, given that the majority of its work was centred on situations in Africa. It was encouraging, in that regard, that the Council’s most recent statement on the situation in Burundi was similar to that issued by the African Union. According to another participant, Council deliberations needed to engage more fully with African viewpoints on African issues, especially on topics related to conflict prevention. There should be more frequent meetings between the Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on the question of conflict prevention and more visits to see the situation on the ground.

Although hardly a new tool, *démarches* by the President, it was said, had been employed several times over the past year with some success. It was a way to send discreet signals without stirring up too much public attention. Consideration should

be given to employing them more often. Another speaker commented that instead of the overuse of statements by the President and press statements, it would be better to promote démarches by the President and/or interested delegations. A third participant declared that it was a good thing that démarches were being used more often as a diplomatic and messaging tool. Sometimes they had been employed bilaterally. There had been cases in which a démarche by several members of the Council had persuaded a Government to act responsibly.

One participant spoke of the inflation in the number of press statements and the time spent, around the clock and on weekends, negotiating them. Despite those efforts, many of them had gone unnoticed in the real world and even in diplomatic circles. Putting out so many press statements that got ignored posed a risk to the reputation and credibility of the Council. There should be a concerted effort to release them only when the Council really had something to say. Stake-outs could be used more often as a vehicle for parallel statements to the press by multiple members of the Council. Concurring on the inflation of press statements, one interlocutor suggested that the approach to them be reconsidered, if it was correct that they had been undermining the credibility of the Council.

One participant noted that Council missions to the field could be very useful, particularly when they gave members a chance to see some of the shortages that peacekeeping units faced in the field — information that was often deleted from the sanitized reports that members received in New York. It was hard to get a proper feel for the challenges faced by peacekeepers without hearing about fuel shortages and rampant malaria first-hand. Noting that undertaking such a mission was generally better than sitting in New York waiting for reports on a situation, one participant asked how such visits were funded, given the lack of a formal budget for such initiatives. The response was that creative ways were always found for such efforts and that no mission had failed to be undertaken because of a lack of resources. Another speaker noted both the value of well-planned missions and the hope that the postponed visit to Yemen could be undertaken early in the coming year. In terms of outreach, it was said that more attention should be devoted to how the annual report of the Council was produced and how much it cost. Those funds might be put to better use elsewhere.

Session III

Lessons learned: reflections of the class of 2015

Moderator

Ambassador Liu Jieyi
Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations

Commentators

Tchouli Gombo
Political Coordinator, Permanent Mission of Chad to the United Nations

Ambassador Mahmoud D. Hmoud
Deputy Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations

Ambassador Raimonda Murmokaitė
Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations

Kayode Laro
Minister, Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations

Ambassador Carlos Olgún Cigarroa
Deputy Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations

Challenges

Over the past two years, it was noted, the class of 2015 had faced a wide range of fast-moving crises. The Council had been able to respond to the violence in the Central African Republic, Liberia and South Sudan, albeit too slowly. That had entailed addressing the implications of the unprecedented Ebola virus disease outbreak, major civilian protection challenges, peacekeeping operations that needed bolstering, the imposition or refinement of sanctions regimes and dealing with parties that lacked commitment to peace processes and, in some cases, might have harboured pre-genocidal intentions. Each of those situations, and many others, would require the continuing engagement of the Council with Governments and parties in the coming year. Efforts to reconfigure the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti involved not only a cooperative working relationship with the Government, but also collaboration with civil society, local authorities and, importantly, the Group of Friends of Haiti. The cooperation with the Group of Friends was instrumental in moving the situation forward and could offer lessons that could be replicated elsewhere. Among the persistent challenges for the Council over the past two years had been conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding, including finding ways to collaborate effectively with the Peacebuilding Commission and more broadly across the United Nations system. The good offices of the President could be further developed, the Chairs of the sanctions committees had an important role to play, and the recent reviews of peace operations, the peacebuilding architecture and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) offered opportunities to enhance Council capacities over the coming year and beyond. The establishment of the Office of the Ombudsperson had provided a way to reinforce due process, while further refining the targeting of sanctions, which remained an essential tool of the Council.

Another participant drew attention to the acute challenges to peace and security in the Middle East that had presented the Council with a demanding test over the two previous years. In the wake of the Arab Spring, the Council had tried to deal with the war in the Syrian Arab Republic and the enormous refugee crisis it had produced, the continuing violence in Libya and Yemen and some of the political and security issues related to the State of Palestine. Meeting the threat posed by non-State armed groups based in the region had become a priority for many members of the Council. Historically, the Council had found it difficult to make much of a difference on the State of Palestine or the security challenges of the Middle East more broadly. In that context, the agreement on the first statement by the President related to the State of Palestine in many years constituted a positive step forward. The Council press statement on Jerusalem had apparently helped to quell tensions and violence there. However, neither the Council nor the Secretary-General's envoys had been able to pursue a consistent approach to the crisis in Yemen. The shifting strategies and assessments had made a difficult situation even more difficult, although there had been some positive developments more recently. The Council had tried to maintain humanitarian access to vulnerable populations in Yemen, even as it sought to end the violence. An Arria formula meeting had been

called recently to draw attention to the plight of the civilian population and to seek fresh perspectives on how to resolve the crisis. The political dynamics in the Council, which had not been easy to begin with, were set back further after the crisis over Ukraine.

One participant commented that it was a reality that the margin of action of the elected members was limited but that they could find ways of working within those limits. That should not be seen as an obstacle to pursuing one's issues and interests within the Council. It would be better, in terms of making a difference, to have three-year instead of two-year terms. A second speaker agreed that time did fly on the Council and that three years would have been much better than two. According to a third speaker, three-year terms could be possible if the Charter was amended to add 5 more non-permanent members, with all 15 then elected for renewable three-year terms. That would be one way of increasing the leverage of the non-permanent members. Another participant commented that, despite all the very real frustrations of serving as a non-permanent member, it was good news that there were always Member States seeking a term on the Council. According to another interlocutor, life on the Council was so busy that there was no time to complain about being treated unfairly. The workdays were often 14-15 hours long. Three of the participants spoke of their experience as pen holders on the Sahel region, the humanitarian crisis in and around the Syrian Arab Republic, one of the resolutions on Libya and on three thematic subjects, respectively.

Assessment

It was pointed out that the number of public debates and open meetings had grown substantially but that more meetings had not equated to better results on the ground. There had been too many meetings without outcomes and too many outcomes without results. The frequency of meetings of troop- and police-contributing countries had also increased, but conditions for troops and police on the ground had not improved. Sometimes, such meetings had led troop contributors to attach strings and conditions to deployment that had weakened the capacity to protect civilians or respond to attacks by non-State armed groups. Little consulting took place in informal consultations, which were used primarily as a place to read statements. Members generally stuck to national positions. In Arria formula meetings, on the other hand, there could be real interactions, so they tended to be more productive. The alternative of Arria formula meetings, however, was no excuse not to improve consultations. According to another speaker, productive Arria formula sessions had been held on a range of thematic and cross-cutting issues, such as internally displaced people and how to protect the human rights of vulnerable groups.

One participant observed that, despite good intentions, efforts by the Council to practise conflict prevention had not fared well on the whole and that their yield had been disappointing. The open debate on inclusive development offered some broader perspectives on prevention, but in practice there had often been a lack of commitment by some of the parties or pushback by the Governments involved. In terms of prevention, special attention was called for concerning the situations in Burundi and Yemen. In both situations, the Council should be prepared to remind the Governments of their responsibility to protect their populations from mass atrocity crimes. In Burundi, as had happened in many other places, the violence had been accompanied by strident rhetoric with strong sectarian overtones. The Council

had, in recent years, paid increasing attention to a raft of human protection goals that sought to offer some protection to vulnerable populations, such as women, children and the displaced. Those efforts should be sustained in the year ahead. In that regard, the imbalance of power within the Council was a continuing concern, as demonstrated in the veto of the draft on the massacre at Srebrenica. The proposed code of conduct launched by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group and the initiative by France and Mexico on veto restraint in situations of mass atrocity sought to address the consequences of the imbalance of power for the prevention of mass atrocity crimes.

One participant suggested that there were some reasons for optimism about the prospect for further reform of working methods. The revised process for selecting the next Secretary-General was an encouraging step forward, one that had taken many years to accomplish. The report on the peacebuilding architecture offered a fresh framework for thinking about ways to enhance collaboration between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. According to a second speaker, the Council needed to be more interactive, more transparent and more efficient and action-oriented. Interactivity would be aided by greater use of the “any other business” item on the agenda, by new meeting formats, such as the breakfasts for permanent representatives only, which offered fresh oxygen to the work of the Council, and by reducing reliance on formats, such as long open debates, that offered little opportunity for interactivity. To boost transparency, a new distribution of pen holder responsibilities should be considered, Christmas tree resolutions should be avoided, incoming members should be elected sooner to bring them up to speed on Council procedures sooner, and the method of assigning the Chairs of subsidiary bodies should be revamped, perhaps with new guidelines introduced. The efficiency and action orientation of the Council would benefit from greater use of démarches, more flexible reporting cycles and a more concerted effort to follow up on the discussions and implement the ideas agreed at the current workshop, as well as at previous ones.

Lessons learned

The incoming members received wide-ranging advice from outgoing and continuing members. Their advice included the following points:

- Incoming members should inject new blood and fresh perspectives into the work of the Council, while outgoing ones should leave a legacy that endures.
- Seize the initiative. The quality of ideas does not depend on the size or experience of the delegation.
- Curiosity compensates for inexperience.
- Float new ideas. The Council needs fresh thinking. Dare to be innovative when it comes to working methods.
- Be prepared to lose some battles, then be prepared to get right up and keep going to the next one.
- Know what you want to do. Act early. Stay with it.
- Relish an early presidency. It will make “hitting the ground running” a necessity.

- Learn the jargon and the acronyms. Keep track of the programme of work, as it changes quickly.
- Keep your capital informed, or others will. Develop an early warning system to provide a heads-up when other Member States are going to your capital on issues before the Council.
- Try to keep your ministers on board. Be sure they have your back. Be sure you have the budgetary resources to carry out your plans.
- Pick your team very carefully, especially the political coordinator.
- Look to the Secretariat for expert assistance, especially on procedures that might otherwise kill you. They are knowledgeable, but do not expect them to solve your political problems or speak to your ministers.
- Get help from the Security Council Report, a key resource that wants you to succeed. Use its excellent website and help them get the information they need in a timely and accurate manner.
- Reach out in all directions to other Member States, regional groups and non-governmental organizations. Share information and learn. You will need allies.
- Do not neglect “MISC”: members, issues, the Secretariat and the capital.
- Balance your responsibilities to the Council and to the General Assembly. At the same time, be prepared to do the work of the Council round the clock. Morning, evening, it does not stop.
- Consider regular lunches with a small group of permanent representatives to get their ongoing feedback.
- Take the pen. Do not wait for it to be given to you, otherwise stop complaining that others are holding the pen. Accept the work it entails and do not use it for narrow national purposes.
- Hold open debates — every President seems to want to — but try to identify less common topics that will have more value added, such as cross-cutting issues related to humanitarian affairs, human rights and human protection themes. Do not get bogged down by controversies — they are inevitable but can absorb more time than they are worth.
- When others are holding open debates, try to remain in the Chamber for as long as possible, even if only to show respect for ministers, other high-level speakers and other permanent representatives. On the other hand, show restraint in terms of organizing seemingly endless open debates with 100 speakers or more. Such grand events are generally best left to the General Assembly.
- Take the opportunity to chair subsidiary bodies very seriously. Do your homework. Visit the countries involved. Try to help.
- Review texts of resolutions, statements by the President and press statements carefully. Do not leave that task entirely to experts.
- Go on missions, meet the players, and see what is actually happening on the ground.

- Do not be passive. Do not be a victim.
 - Remember that the Council has to succeed, not just try hard.
 - Look for opportunities, not excuses.
 - Do not undermine any of the 15 members. At one point or another, you will need each of them. The Council works best when everyone tries to work together. Consensus is always the preferred option.
 - Bond with the other non-permanent members. The 10 of you can make a greater difference when you work together. Consider a “class of 2017” yearbook of your shared experiences.
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