

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 24 August 2012 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland held the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March 2012. An assessment of the work of the Council has been prepared under my supervision in consultation with the other members of the Council (see annex).

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

(Signed) Philip **Parham**  
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



**Annex to the letter dated 24 August 2012 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

**Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (March 2012)**

**Introduction**

During the month of March 2012, under the presidency of Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, the Security Council held 16 public meetings and 16 closed consultations. The Council adopted two resolutions and five presidential statements and issued seven statements to the press.

**Briefing by the Department of Political Affairs**

On 6 March the members of the Council were briefed in closed consultations by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe. The briefing was in the context of "horizon scanning" by the Department of Political Affairs.

On the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Under-Secretary-General said that violence continued, civilians continued to be killed and many thousands of Syrian refugees were flooding across the Lebanese border. He hoped the Security Council would issue a statement in support of the work of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, and the new Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Kofi Annan.

On the situation in Mali following the recent intensification of fighting, the Under-Secretary-General said that the fighting had led to deterioration in the humanitarian situation and increased political tension. Large quantities of weapons and experienced fighters had returned from Libya. Tuareg tribes had links to terrorist groups in the region. On the situation in Senegal, he noted the peaceful and orderly first round of presidential elections in that country. He said that the second round would be held on 25 March, and the United Nations would retain a tracking brief.

On the situation in Maldives, the Under-Secretary-General said that political friction continued. The two sides had been unable to agree on a date for fresh elections. The opening of parliament had been disrupted and the opposition had prevented the new President from entering the building. The Under-Secretary-General welcomed the appointment of the Commonwealth Special Envoy, Sir Donald McKinnon. Some members expressed the view that internal situations in countries such as Senegal and Maldives had no bearing on the Council's responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

On the situation in Camp Ashraf in Iraq, the Under-Secretary-General commended Iraqi authorities on their handling of the first move from Camp Ashraf,

but reported that the second scheduled transfer had not yet been possible. During this monthly “horizon scanning” briefing by the Department of Political Affairs, several members expressed their support for such briefings. However there was a discussion about the best format for these meetings.

## **Africa**

### **Guinea-Bissau**

On 28 March the Council received briefings from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, Joseph Mutaboba, and Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti of Brazil in her capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, on the situation in the country following the first round of presidential elections on 18 March. The Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau also made a statement to the Council.

Following the briefing the Council issued a statement to the press on 31 March, in which it welcomed the smooth conduct of the first round of the presidential elections and urged the political parties to engage in dialogue on the conduct of the run-off election. The Council called on the political leaders and their supporters to exercise restraint and resolve their disputes in line with the country’s constitutional framework and in accordance with their regional obligations. The Council emphasized the need for the national authorities to bring those responsible for election-related violence to justice and reiterated the Government’s primary responsibility for ensuring the security of its population during the elections. The Council called on the defence and security forces to respect civilian oversight and control of the military, the constitutional order and the rule of law. The Council underlined the importance of the successful conclusion of the run-off election to achieving progress on critical peacebuilding priorities in Guinea-Bissau such as security sector reform, fighting impunity and drug trafficking, achieving progress in socioeconomic development and moving forward the national dialogue on reconciliation. The Council called on the Special Representative to continue using his good offices to support national efforts aimed at holding peaceful, free, fair and transparent elections and further called on the international community to support Guinea-Bissau to achieve these aims.

### **Libya**

On 7 March the Council held a briefing and closed consultations on the situation in Libya. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ian Martin, briefed the Council, focusing on the Secretary-General’s recommendations for the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) for a further 12 months. The Special Representative said that, in order to fit the Libyan context, UNSMIL would maintain a flexible approach and focus on five priorities: the democratic transition and electoral processes; public security; arms proliferation and border security; human rights, transitional justice and the rule of law; and coordination of international assistance.

The Prime Minister of Libya, Abdurrahim El-Keib, also addressed Council members. He said that progress had been made since the declaration of liberation but that Libya had suffered from the heritage of a dictator who had deprived the

country of development and prosperity. There were many challenges to overcome in the transitional period and Libya welcomed the support of the international community. The Prime Minister circulated a letter to the Council that endorsed the 12-month extension of the UNSMIL mandate.

Some Council members raised the question of NATO action in Libya and referred to the report of the International Commission of Inquiry in Libya (A/HRC/19/68) that mentioned civilian deaths as a result of NATO actions. They repeated calls for a Security Council-mandated investigation into allegations of civilian casualties. Some other Council members noted that the International Commission of Inquiry in Libya had concluded that NATO “had conducted a highly precise campaign with a demonstrable determination to avoid civilian casualties” and rejected the need for a Security Council investigation. The Prime Minister said that the blood of Libyans should not be fodder for political propaganda, that the Libyan Government had investigated the circumstances of the deaths of each and every Libyan civilian, and had enjoyed the cooperation of NATO. He said this matter should not be raised to impede or prevent the international community from intervening in situations in other States where the people are being massacred by their own rulers.

In closed consultations, the majority of Council members focused their statements on the UNSMIL mandate renewal. Council members expressed support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and drew attention to the need for a process of national reconciliation in Libya. The treatment of detainees was a major concern. Looking ahead to the electoral process, some Council members said that the participation of women was essential. Some Council members raised concerns over the treatment of migrant workers.

On 12 March the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2040 (2012), by which it renewed the mandate of UNSMIL for a further 12 months. The mandate included support to Libyan efforts to manage the process of democratic transition; promote the rule of law and monitor and protect human rights; restore public security; counter illicit proliferation of arms; secure and manage Libya’s borders; and coordinate and facilitate international assistance and build government capacity. After the vote, the representative of Libya made a statement welcoming the renewal of UNSMIL for a further year.

### **Sierra Leone**

On 22 March, the Council received briefings from the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone, Michael von der Schulenburg; Ambassador Guillermo Rishchynski of Canada in his capacity as Chair of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission; and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone, Joseph B. Dauda, on the situation in the country. Some Council members expressed concern at imports of heavy weaponry into the country for use by the paramilitary police and the hardening of the rhetoric between the political parties. Some Council members noted the importance of the national authorities addressing those concerns and undertaking confidence-building measures in advance of the elections in November. The Council agreed to issue a presidential statement noting the steady progress that Sierra Leone had made on its path to peace consolidation and calling on the political

parties to remain committed to open and inclusive dialogue in order to foster a conducive environment for the elections. The Council also recognized the positive contribution made by the outgoing Executive Representative and called on the Secretary-General to promptly appoint a successor.

### **Somalia**

On 5 March, the Council held an open debate on Somalia chaired by the Minister for Africa of the United Kingdom, Henry Bellingham. The Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Somalia, Augustine Mahiga, briefed the Council on the latest developments, including the London Conference on Somalia held on 23 February.

Several speakers stressed the importance of Somali stakeholders developing representative institutions to succeed the transitional federal institutions in August 2012. Some stressed the need for the international community to provide technical and financial support to that end. Speakers welcomed the adoption of resolution 2036 (2012) on support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and called for the Mission quickly to reach its mandated strength. Many encouraged new donors also to contribute to AMISOM. Speakers welcomed the launch, at the London Conference, of the Stability Fund for Somalia, and several underlined the need to develop, in particular, the Somali security and justice sectors. Speakers also said that the international community must continue to provide humanitarian assistance to Somalia.

The Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/4), in which it welcomed the London Conference on Somalia held on 23 February, fully supported its communiqué and emphasized the Council's determination to support the Somali people as they build peace and stability in Somalia.

### **Somalia/Eritrea**

On 28 March, the Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, briefed the Council in closed consultations on the Committee's work and on the latest report of the Monitoring Group, including on the activities of Al-Shabaab and on possible violations of the arms embargo. He noted that the Monitoring Group had reported a lack of cooperation from the Government of Eritrea with its work. Council members expressed concern about Al-Shabaab's presence in northern Somalia and its reported links with Al-Qaida. Council members called for greater political progress in Somalia. Council members also called for Eritrea to cooperate with the Monitoring Group in the exercise of its mandate.

### **South Sudan/Sudan**

On 6 March, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/5) calling on the Sudan and South Sudan to end cross-border violence and support for proxy forces; to cooperate fully with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel in resolving urgently all outstanding issues between them; and to work for two viable States, embracing democratic governance, human rights and economic development. The Council also highlighted the Council's deep concern about the conflict in the Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan States of the Sudan. After the adoption of the presidential statement, the representatives of the Sudan and South

Sudan addressed the Council. Both underlined the readiness of their Governments to work for a peaceful resolution of outstanding issues between them.

On 15 March, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, Hilde Johnson, briefed the Council on the latest developments in South Sudan. She focused on inter-tribal violence, the issue of disarmament in Jonglei, the oil shutdown and the worsening humanitarian situation. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, also spoke to update the Council on the outcomes of talks between the Sudan and South Sudan in Addis Ababa on 13 March. Council members expressed their thanks for the hard work of the Special Representative. They shared their concerns over North/South tensions and the impact of the oil shutdown, but cautiously welcomed the agreements reached on the status of nationals and the demarcation of the border.

On 21 March the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), Ambassador Néstor Osorio, delivered the Committee's 90-day report to the Council. He reported the action that the Committee had agreed to take in response to the recommendations contained in the final report of the Panel of Experts. Several Council members highlighted the need to seek more information from the Government of the Sudan about the attack on 10 October 2011 on UNAMID in the Zam Zam camp for internally displaced persons. Others expressed particular concern about the activities of the Sudan Revolutionary Front and suggested that the Committee consider restrictive measures. Council members discussed publication of the final report of the Panel of Experts. Some stressed the need for timely publication to ensure transparency. Others expressed concerns about the content of the report.

### **Sahel region**

On 13 March the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator briefed the Council in closed consultations via videoconference on the humanitarian situation in the Sahel. She discussed the developing food and nutrition crisis and its underlying causes and highlighted the need for early action. She noted the joint visit she and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Helen Clark, had undertaken to the region in February, and their agreement on the need for integrated regional solutions to address the immediate humanitarian needs and the root causes of instability and to build community resilience. The Under-Secretary-General also discussed the internal conflict in Mali, and the ensuing refugee situation. Council members welcomed the Under-Secretary-General's briefing and her visit to the Niger, and agreed on the importance of integrated, comprehensive humanitarian and development approaches to the Sahel. Council members also agreed to renew discussions on a draft statement to the press.

### **Peace and security in Africa**

On 26 March, the Council considered the item entitled "Peace and security in Africa", and adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/7) concerning the situation in Mali and the Sahel. In the statement the Council expressed its concern over the humanitarian and security situation in the Sahel region, which was being complicated by the presence of armed groups as well as by the proliferation of weapons. It condemned the forcible seizure of power by elements of the Malian

army and called for constitutional order to be restored through appropriate political dialogue. It encouraged the international community to provide support to resolve the crisis in Mali and the Sahel region based on an integrated strategy for immediate and long-term needs.

## **Europe**

### **Cyprus**

On 29 March the Council convened in closed consultations. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, Alexander Downer, briefed the Council on the current status of the Cyprus talks. He said that progress since the second talks at Greentree had been “minimal”, and drew attention to the risk of a multilateral conference leading to a reversal of the progress of the past four years. He would meet the Secretary-General on 19 April to discuss his recommendations on the future of the good offices mission.

## **Middle East**

### **Yemen**

On 7 March, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen, Jamal Benomar, briefed the Council in closed consultations. He underlined the need for progress in the political transition and stressed the next major milestones. Council members welcomed the Secretary-General’s continued engagement on Yemen and some expressed support for the opening of a small office to support the transition in Sana’a.

On 29 March the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/8) on Yemen, in which it underlined the progress in the transition thus far, highlighted the key next steps, including the holding of a conference for national dialogue, and welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General to establish a small team in Yemen to monitor the implementation of the transition.

### **Lebanon**

On 21 March, the Secretary-General’s Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Derek Plumbly, briefed the Council on resolution 1701 (2006). He said that the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to affect Lebanon as evidenced by deaths on the border and increased numbers of refugees. The demarcation of the Blue Line continued during the reporting period. He called for the National Dialogue to reconvene, for Israel to withdraw from northern Ghajar and for the dismantling of the bases of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — General Command and Fatah-Intifada in Lebanon. Most Council members agreed with the Secretary-General’s assessment and urged further progress.

### **The situation in the Middle East: challenges and opportunities**

On 12 March, the Council held a ministerial-level open debate on the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East”. The debate was chaired by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, William Hague, and was also attended by the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany,

Guatemala, Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. The Secretary-General briefed the Council.

The Secretary-General highlighted the remarkable events in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen that have transformed the region. Transformation had been spontaneous and home-grown, but it had involved a great deal of human suffering and loss of life. He set out five principles concerning the Arab Spring, namely, (i) leaders in the region should implement meaningful reform or make way for those that would; (ii) the goal should be plural societies that protected the rights of minorities; (iii) women had been a driving force in transformation across the region and had a right to make decisions about the political future of those countries undergoing transition; (iv) societies had to create opportunities for the youth — 50 million new jobs were needed across the region in the next decade; and (v) change in the Middle East would not be complete without peace between Israel and Palestine. The region would also benefit from an end to tensions rooted in concerns over the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On the Syrian Arab Republic, the Secretary-General said that what had started as a peaceful call for freedom had descended into a spiral of violence and uncertainty. The Syrian Government had failed to fulfil its responsibility to protect its own people and instead had subjected them in several cities to military assault and disproportionate use of force. The Secretary-General drew attention to the fact that the international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic had concluded that Syrian Government forces had committed widespread, systematic and gross human rights violations amounting to crimes against humanity. The Secretary-General noted that the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Kofi Annan, had held comprehensive and frank discussions with President Bashar al-Assad on 10 and 11 March. The Joint Special Envoy had made concrete proposals for ending the bloodshed and initiating a Syrian-led political process. The Secretary-General appealed to the Security Council to unite strongly behind ending the violence and supporting the mission of the Joint Special Envoy. He appreciated the recent initiatives of the Russian Federation and China, including their engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic and the League of Arab States. He hoped that the Council would agree on a consensus resolution that would send a signal of strong resolve.

On the Arab Spring, most Council members welcomed positive and home-grown change in the region and stressed the importance of appropriate international assistance to countries in transition. Most members stressed the importance of national ownership of change; that change could not be dictated or imposed from the outside; and that economic and political reform had to go hand in hand. Many Council members said that progress in the region would be incomplete without a sustainable solution to the Palestinian question. On the Syrian Arab Republic, most Council members expressed deep concern at the deteriorating situation and said that the time had come for the Council to speak with one voice on the issue. One member of the Council said that the Syrian Government undoubtedly “bore a huge responsibility” for the current situation, but that it was also “fighting armed groups and Al-Qaida”.



### **The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question**

On 27 March, the Council held its monthly meeting on the Middle East. The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Robert Serry, briefed the Council at a public meeting. Council members then discussed the matter further in closed consultations.

The Special Coordinator said that there was a dangerous combination of lack of political progress, instability and violence on the ground, and an increasingly precarious situation for the Palestinian Authority. The parties had not found sufficient common ground to resume direct negotiations. A continued political vacuum would threaten the achievements of Palestinian state-building. Such a vacuum would be filled by negative trends. It was essential that the Quartet assume its responsibilities when it met on 11 April. It needed to direct collective efforts towards overcoming gaps in trust and substance.

In closed consultations, the Special Coordinator said that very little was happening and uncertainty was growing. The positions of the parties were far apart. There was no prospect of serious talks until the end of the year. The objective until then should be to keep the Palestinian Authority afloat. The challenge for the Quartet on 11 April was to chart a way forward that kept the prospects of a two-State solution alive. He was concerned that the principles underlying the two-State solution were being eroded, and that action was needed to protect the future of the two-State solution. Some members said the Council should encourage the parties to resume dialogue and to take tangible steps to improve the climate, and suggested that a visit by the Security Council to both Palestine and Israel could be of value. Some members expressed concern that the Council was not providing sufficient support for the Quartet's difficult work. Several members also condemned indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza into southern Israel.

Most Council members lamented the lack of progress. Many said that time was running out for the two-State solution and that the Quartet needed to do more — including by charting a clear way forward on 11 April.

On 1 March, the Council adopted a statement to the press on humanitarian access in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Council expressed its deep disappointment that the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator was not granted authorization to visit the country by the Syrian Government in a timely manner, despite repeated requests and intense diplomatic contacts aimed at securing Syrian approval. It called on the Syrian authorities to grant her immediate and unhindered access. It deplored the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, in particular the growing number of affected civilians, the lack of safe access to adequate medical services, and food shortages, particularly in areas affected by fighting and violence such as Homs, Hama, Dar'a and Idlib. It also called on the Syrian authorities to allow immediate, full and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel to all populations in need of assistance, in accordance with international law and the guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, and on all parties in the country, in particular the Syrian authorities, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and relevant humanitarian organizations to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance and allow evacuation of the wounded from affected areas.

On 16 March, the Council held consultations on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Kofi Annan, briefed the Council by video link. He said that he had met with President Al-Assad twice and had spoken in frank terms. The use of force would only deepen the crisis and breed radicalism. The immediate priority had to be to stop the violence and bring in a United Nations monitoring mechanism.

The Joint Special Envoy outlined the six-point proposal that he had presented to President Al-Assad on 11 March: (i) commit to working with the Joint Special Envoy on an inclusive Syrian-led political process to address the legitimate aspirations and concerns of the Syrian people — President Al-Assad should appoint an empowered interlocutor when requested to do so by the Joint Special Envoy; (ii) commit to stop the fighting and achieve urgently an effective United Nations-supervised cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties the Syrian Government should immediately cease troop movements towards population centres, end the use of heavy weapons in population centres, and begin pullback of military “concentrations” in and around population centres, and, as these actions were taken on the ground, the Joint Special Envoy had pledged to seek similar commitments from the opposition and all “relevant elements”; (iii) ensure timely provision of humanitarian assistance; (iv) in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), intensify the pace and scale of release of arbitrarily detained persons, provide ICRC with a list of locations of detention facilities and begin arranging access, and respond promptly in writing to all written requests from ICRC; (v) ensure freedom of movement throughout the Syrian Arab Republic for journalists, and a non-discriminatory visa policy for them; and (vi) respect freedom of association and the right to demonstrate peacefully “as legally guaranteed”.

The Joint Special Envoy said that the Syrian Government’s initial response of 13 March had been “disappointing”. On 14 March, he had received a further communication, in which the regime had agreed that the aim was to halt the violence. They wanted a dialogue on the details and modalities. He said that he would pursue this discussion urgently over the coming days through the despatch of a technical team to Damascus.

He appealed for “sustained pressure” from the Council and for unity behind his efforts; the clearer the collective message, the better the chance that the dynamic could be shifted.

The Joint Special Envoy also briefed the Council on his contacts in the region (Ankara, Cairo, Doha) and with the opposition. The opposition needed to come together under one umbrella. The political side was a little easier to handle.

All Council members expressed their full support for the Joint Special Envoy and his approach. After the meeting, the Council President conveyed the Council’s full support to the press.

On 21 March, the Council agreed on and issued a presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/6), in which it expressed its gravest concern about the deteriorating situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Council reaffirmed its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the country, and to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The Council welcomed the appointment of the Joint Special Envoy, and expressed its

full support for his efforts to bring an immediate end to all violence and human rights violations, secure humanitarian access, and facilitate a Syrian-led political transition to a democratic, plural political system. The Council stated its full support for the Joint Special Envoy's initial six-point proposal to the Syrian authorities, and called on the Syrian Government and opposition to work in good faith with the Joint Special Envoy towards a peaceful settlement of the Syrian crisis and to implement fully and immediately his initial six-point proposal. The Council, through the statement, requested the Joint Special Envoy to brief the Council regularly and in a timely manner on the progress of his mission. In the light of those reports, the Council would consider further steps as appropriate.

On 21 March, the Council adopted a statement to the press, in which it condemned in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks that occurred in Damascus on 17 and 19 March and in Aleppo on 18 March.

## **Asia**

### **Afghanistan**

On 20 March the Council held a debate on the situation in Afghanistan to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2012/133). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Ján Kubiš, briefed the Council. He said that security transition was on track and on target, and that the Afghan National Security Forces had proved up to their tasks. Afghans had made clear their strong desire for peace. The dialogue of UNAMA with Afghans also revealed that corruption, lack of justice and abuse of authority were seen by many as the biggest problem facing ordinary people, coupled with lack of opportunities for urban youth. There was near universal recognition of the value of the work of the United Nations and UNAMA.

The Special Representative stressed that transition encompassed accelerated Afghan leadership, responsibility in governance, rule of law, justice, development, and combating corruption. He also said that stronger efforts in combating drug production and trafficking are critically important, given the increase in poppy cultivation and opium production and the consequent increased threat to security, stability, development and governance in Afghanistan and the region. Recalling the firm mutual commitments made by the international community and Afghanistan at the Bonn Conference in December 2011, he looked forward to the NATO Chicago summit on security in May, the Kabul ministerial meeting on regional cooperation in June and the Tokyo conference in July. Progress on governance was required ahead of this. He noted that many Afghan interlocutors emphasized the presidential polls of 2014. Elections were an Afghan process to be managed by Afghan bodies. For the results to be trusted, Afghanistan's electoral process, including electoral reform, needed to be strengthened and improved. The United Nations had a supporting role in this at the request of Afghan authorities.

The Special Representative spoke of efforts to improve human rights in Afghanistan, although noting that violence against women and girls remained pervasive. He noted that 2011 was the fifth year in a row that civilian deaths rose, the most recent annual rise being due to increased civilian casualties caused by anti-government forces. The nascent peace process had to be Afghan-led and

genuinely inclusive, and could not be concluded at the expense of the achievements of the past decade. He noted that there had been repeated requests for UNAMA to continue to support the High Peace Council and generally make use of its good offices and services in support of peace and reconciliation. A further priority was to ensure greater coherence in the United Nations efforts and that United Nations activities were outcome-oriented, transparent and cost effective.

On 22 March the Council adopted unanimously resolution 2041 (2012), extending the mandate of UNAMA until 23 March 2013. The resolution took full account of the transition process and was in support of Afghanistan's leadership and ownership in security, governance and development. UNAMA was mandated to support the Government of Afghanistan including through promoting aid coherence, continuing the cooperation with the International Security Assistance Force and the NATO senior civilian representative in order to optimize civil-military coordination, providing good offices to support, if requested by the Afghan Government, peace and reconciliation, supporting elections and the electoral process as well as regional cooperation. The Council further called for UNAMA and the Special Representative, leveraging the competencies of the United Nations country team, to have a continued presence in Afghanistan, support efforts to improve governance and the rule of law, promote human rights, and coordinate humanitarian assistance. The Council also emphasized the continuing importance of combating terrorist activities and tackling drug production, trade and trafficking.

## **Americas**

### **Haiti**

On 8 March the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Mariano Fernandez, briefed the Council on the Secretary-General's recent report (S/2012/128), including the situation in the country and the activities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). He spoke of the difficult situation and extreme poverty Haitians currently suffered. Political leaders were not showing the willingness to compromise for progress, and the recent resignation of the Prime Minister, Garry Conille, was of concern as he had served only four months. The Special Representative urged the President and Parliament to work together to appoint and confirm a new Prime Minister in a timely manner. More positively, he welcomed the establishment of a fully staffed Supreme Court, after a hiatus of five years. Turning to policing, he said that the Haitian National Police force now had 10,000 officers but, with a population of 10 million people, this was not enough. He called for increased political will to rejuvenate the Haitian National Police, as significant progress had so far been slow.

Members of the Council echoed the Special Representative's call on political leaders to work together in the spirit of compromise.

On 15 March Council members met in closed consultations to exchange views and observations on the Security Council visit to Haiti from 13 to 16 February. As requested, the United Kingdom presidency conveyed the Council's views to the Secretary-General.

## **Thematic issues**

### **Peacekeeping operations**

On 26 March, the Council held consultations on United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, and the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Susana Malcorra, gave public briefings before the Council moved into closed consultations for a discussion. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations said that peacebuilding was a “generational effort” to help post-conflict countries maintain a sufficient level of stability and security independent from a peacekeeping operation. Peacekeepers should be mandated to stabilize the country, but also to contribute to building a sustainable peace. Peacekeeping operations should help to identify a country’s specific peacebuilding priorities in the earliest stages of deployment. Transition could not simply be about reducing troop numbers, and drawdown should be gradual, testing the capacity of the host country to assume responsibilities, and sensitive to public perceptions. Benchmarks should be used to measure progress. Regular reviews should be conducted to consider the role of United Nations and non-United Nations partners and their contributions to building peace. Early conversations were necessary with all actors to establish the terms of a possible follow-on presence. The Under-Secretary-General for Field Support said that the Department would work to minimize the negative socioeconomic impact of peacekeeping, particularly at the point of mission drawdown. The civilian capacity review could strengthen inter-operability across the United Nations to make better use of resources and to support integrated planning. She added that a different yet important contribution the United Nations brings to post-conflict societies is in the form of national staff capacity development. The ongoing civilian capacity review is another vital part of this effort. Assessing more effectively the needed civilian experts and deploying them into missions to support the development of national capacities is needed to help to plan and execute peacebuilding tasks as well as effective transitions.

An exchange of views followed. The President noted that the discussions had indicated support for the Council’s ensuring that (i) planning for transition was integrated and started early; (ii) host government peacebuilding objectives remained central to the mandate; (iii) all United Nations stakeholders were included in transition planning; (iv) the socioeconomic impact of transition was mitigated wherever possible; and (v) that reviews of progress, including by “mapping” all peacebuilding activity, were conducted regularly.

### **Subsidiary bodies**

#### **Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006)**

On 21 March, the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006), Ambassador Néstor Osorio, delivered his 90-day report on the Committee’s work to the Security Council. In his report, he noted *inter alia* the correspondence received by the Committee and the Panel, and that the Committee had heard reports of Iranian links with the Syrian Arab Republic and Hizbullah and about the similarities between the space and ballistic missiles programmes of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

## **Other matters**

### **Working methods**

On 19 March, the Council held consultations on working methods on the basis of a non-paper produced by Portugal and the United Kingdom. Council members expressed support for spreading out the workload of the Council more evenly throughout the year, clustering similar issues together more effectively, and ensuring that reporting requirements were fit for purpose. Council members agreed that detailed plans to that end should be taken forward in the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which could report back to the Council by mid-July.

Council members were unanimous in their support for a better level of planning accuracy by reallocating Fridays to the subsidiary organs, while retaining the flexibility to meet at any time.

Council members supported the use of videoconference facilities for briefings, provided there was a balance between videoconferences and live briefings. All members supported more interactive exchanges among Council members, and more targeted briefings by United Nations officials. Some Council members expressed support for the monthly horizon-scanning briefings by the Department of Political Affairs, although several members said the agenda for that meeting should be more focused and some questioned the requirement for such meetings. Some members called for a more directive approach from the rotating presidency to facilitate discussions after briefings, including by breaking up the discussion into key issues. In recognition of the costs of Council meetings, and the time pressure on Council business, several delegations said that the Council should aim to conduct consultations on any given subject within one and a half hours, allowing two consultation subjects to be scheduled per half-day meeting.

Some Council members mentioned other broader reform ideas beyond those mentioned in the Portugal-United Kingdom non-paper, including some that had been brought up during the open debate on working methods in November 2011. These would continue to be discussed within the Informal Working Group.

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