

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
21 June 2022

Original: English

**Letter dated 21 June 2022 from the Permanent Representative of
Albania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the pleasure to inform you that Albania, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of June 2022, will hold an open debate on the theme “Working methods of the Security Council”, in connection with the item entitled “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council ([S/2017/507](#))”. The open debate will be held on Tuesday, 28 June, at 10 a.m.

In order to guide the discussions on this topic, Albania has prepared a concept note, which is contained in the annex to the present letter. I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ferit **Hoxha**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 21 June 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on the theme “Security Council working methods”, 28 June 2022

Date: 28 June 2022
Time: 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
Location: Security Council Chamber
Participation: This meeting is open to all United Nations Member States, Permanent Observers, non-governmental organizations and the press.

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Background

Since 2010, the Security Council has held annual open debates on its working methods. These meetings have served to take stock of the evolution of the working methods of the Council and to engage with the wider membership on behalf of which the Council acts, pursuant to Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations. This open debate will serve to take stock of the very challenging circumstances in which the Council is operating, particularly in the past two and a half years.

The outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in 2020 posed an unprecedented challenge to the functioning of the Security Council and consequently to its ability to deliver on its mandate to maintain international peace and security. Furthermore, geopolitical trends in recent years have understandably affected the degree of effective multilateral engagement, including at the Council.

While the Security Council successfully confronted the pandemic with creativity and purpose, it has not been so successful in preventing divisions among its members. In terms of successes, faced with the inability to meet in person, the Council was able to continue its deliberations through videoconferences, vote on resolutions through a new written voting procedure and maintain engagement with the wider membership through the submission of written statements. Despite demonstrating the Council’s resilience, these successful innovations in its working methods were implemented in the context of progressively deepening divisions among its members, as evidenced by the decrease in the unanimity of its decisions and an overall increase in vetoes cast.

While 2022 has so far been marked by the restoration of the Security Council’s pre-pandemic working methods, new geopolitical challenges have led to unprecedented levels of fragmentation within the Council. In this context, the Council has sent mixed messages to the international community.

On the positive front, the Security Council has continued to deliberate and take decisions on many different issues of concern to international peace and security on its agenda, with all meetings thus far in 2022 being held in person and the progressive increase in the participation of the wider membership to the levels that existed prior to March 2020. On a less positive front, the level of unanimity is at an all-time low, as demonstrated by the increasing number of short mandate renewals of critically important field missions, the increasing number of non-unanimous resolutions adopted, and the use of the veto, which has impeded the action of the Council in relation to matters that continue to fundamentally challenge international peace and security.

It was against this background that the General Assembly adopted, unanimously, its resolution [76/262](#), in which it decided to convene a formal meeting of the Assembly to hold a debate within the 10 days after a veto had been cast. It did so while recalling that the International Court of Justice had observed the competence of the General Assembly on questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. The first such debate took place only approximately one month after the adoption of the resolution in April 2022, on 8 June 2022, following vetoes cast in connection with a non-proliferation item.

Despite the challenges, the Security Council continues to be called to action by the wider membership and the international community. In this regard, its working methods constitute a key strategic aspect for the functioning of the Council and are therefore crucial to achieving the Council's goals as a collegial body in delivering on the important responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. Hence, while the Council has the autonomy to determine its rules of procedure under Article 30 of the Charter of the United Nations, its rules of procedure, practices and working methods are of primary concern not only for its members but also for the wider membership of the United Nations.

As Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, Albania is organizing this open debate during its presidency of the Security Council with the hope that discussions and exchanges with the wider membership in the Chamber will encourage the Council and its members to reflect on its working methods as a key strategic tool to assure greater transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in its activities and actions.

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Objectives

The note by the President of 30 August 2017 ([S/2017/507](#)), commonly known as Note 507, and the 13 subsequent notes adopted in 2019 and 2021 incorporate measures agreed to by the Security Council concerning its working methods.

By holding this open debate, Albania aims to strengthen the active dialogue between the members of the Security Council and the wider United Nations membership in assessing the latest developments in the Council's dynamics, the importance of constant development of its working methods, and the identification of possible gaps in the implementation of Note 507 and subsequent notes as well as of the need to develop new notes.

This open debate will serve as an opportunity for the United Nations membership to provide additional practical proposals that may contribute to enhancing the efficiency of the Security Council's working methods, thus enabling the Council to fulfil its primary responsibility effectively and competently for the maintenance of international peace and security.

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Guiding questions

In 2022, the Council has been largely able to maintain the regular conduct of its business in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, its provisional rules of procedure and note 507 and subsequent notes relating to its working methods. In this connection:

- What working methods, if any, developed during the COVID-19 pandemic would be worth retaining as part of the Council's regular conduct of business?

- Should the Council develop a preparedness plan in the event of future emergencies, or is the Council fit for purpose on the basis of the working methods developed during COVID-19 and of the note by the President of 22 December 2021 ([S/2021/1074](#))?
- Bearing in mind the provision in paragraph 74 of note 507 that the work of the Council is a collective endeavour and responsibility and that enhanced cooperation and consultation among all Council members is vital for the efficient and transparent functioning of the Council, what are some of the ways in which the Council's working methods could be harnessed or enhanced to increase trust, build confidence and avoid deadlock among its members?

During 2021, the participation of high-level representatives reached an all-time high as a result of the use of videoconferences and technology. In addition, various informal experiments using virtual reality have been carried out by Council members with a view to connecting with situations on the Council's agenda. In this regard:

- What measures should be taken, if any, to facilitate the participation of high-level representatives?
- What other aspects of technology could or should be leveraged to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's actions?
- Bearing in mind the note by the President of 27 December 2019 ([S/2019/990](#)), should the Council explore other ways of connecting with the situations on its agenda through technology, such as new formats for visiting missions or other types of dialogue with those affected by conflict?

As a result of the note by the President of 27 December 2019 ([S/2019/997](#)), for the past two years, the annual report has been adopted before the deadline set of 30 May. However, monthly assessments continue to be submitted well after the year has passed or not submitted at all. By contrast, for the past two years, wrap-up sessions have been held every month in an informal manner and often guided by the note by the President of 27 December 2019 ([S/2019/994](#)), thereby enhancing the transparency of the Council and the ability of the wider membership to be regularly informed of its activities and actions. In this regard:

- What are some additional measures the Council can undertake to improve transparency and the information about its work?
- What other measures could be considered to encourage the timely submission of monthly assessments?
- What other aspects of the Council's communication with the wider membership, if any, should be enhanced?
- Bearing in mind that, in its paragraph 94, note 507 encourages the President of the Council to "continue holding meetings with the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on a regular basis", what are some additional measures that the Council, and its President, can consider in order to maintain regular communication and increase coordination, cooperation and interaction among the principal organs of the United Nations?

Overall, since the issuance of note 507 in 2017, Council members have made a concerted effort to focus on the implementation of its provisions, including through the informal monthly commitments, formulated in accordance with the note by the President of 12 July 2021 ([S/2021/647](#)). In 2021 and 2022, an increasing number of Council presidencies developed working methods commitments jointly with other presidencies, including on cross-cutting issues such as the Women and Peace and Security agenda. In this regard:

- What are some of the gaps in the implementation of note 507 that should still be tackled? How can the Council as a whole, and the Informal Working Group in particular, both ensure and measure concretely the implementation of the provisions contained in note 507?
- What effect has the practice of monthly working methods commitments had on the work of the Council and how can they be enhanced further? How have those commitments served to increase inclusivity in the Council and promote the Women and Peace and Security agenda?
- Bearing in mind that paragraph 43 of note 507 states the Council's "commitment to continue to take steps to improve the focus and interactivity of its open debates", what are some of the ways that the Council can improve the efficiency of its open debates?

In the note by the President of 27 December 2019 ([S/2019/991](#)), the members of the Council stressed that the informal consultation process for the selection of Chairs should take into account the need for a shared responsibility and a fair distribution of work among all members of the Council, bearing in mind the capacities and resources of members. In addition, the wider membership has called for greater efficiency and transparency in the work of subsidiary bodies, including through the strengthening of due process. In this regard:

- What measures can be undertaken to improve the efficiency and transparency of the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies, including the strengthening of due process?
- What additional measures can be undertaken to ensure fair burden-sharing among all 15 Council members, both in the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies?

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Briefers and format

- Executive Director, Security Council Report, Karin Landgren
- Director, Security Council Procedure, co-author of *The Procedure of the UN Security Council*, Loraine Sievers

Member States wishing to participate in-person should inscribe their names on the list of speakers through the eSpeakers module of e-deleGATE+. A letter addressed to the President of the Security Council, duly signed by the Permanent Representative or the Chargé d'affaires, a.i., requesting to participate in accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure must be uploaded to the eSpeakers module of e-deleGATE+. Inscription for said meeting will open on 23 June 2022, at 9.30 a.m. Please note that delegations speaking in-person are not required to submit a written statement via e-deleGATE+, as the delivered statement will be included in the provisional verbatim record of the meeting.

The list of speakers will be formed in the order in which requests are received. In accordance with the note by the President of the Security Council ([S/2017/507](#)), participants are encouraged to deliver succinct statements. Inscribing delegations are encouraged to limit their statements to no more than three minutes.

Outcome

While the issuance of an outcome document is not envisaged after the open debate, Albania, in its capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group, intends to follow up on the interventions of the open debate and will produce an analytical summary of the proposals made at the meeting, including by the briefers with respect to specific practical proposals put forward during the debate.
