



## Security Council

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### Letter dated 28 December 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit herewith a non-paper, compiled by the delegation of Japan in its national capacity, summarizing the views expressed by the participants in the open debate of the Security Council convened on 20 December 2017 on the subject “Maintenance of international peace and security: addressing complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security” (see annex).

I am grateful for your participation in and contribution to the open debate. It is the hope of the Japanese delegation that this summary will serve as a reference in continued discussions on the role of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

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

*(Signed)* Koro **Bessho**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Representative of Japan  
to the United Nations



## **Annex to the letter dated 28 December 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

### **Presidential summary of the open debate of the Security Council held on 20 December 2017 on the subject “Maintenance of international peace and security: addressing complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security”**

#### **Overview**

The open debate of the Security Council held on 20 December 2017 on the subject “Maintenance of international peace and security: addressing complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security” was convened by Japan during its presidency of the Council.

In recent years, the Council has increasingly discussed the need to address the root causes and multipliers of conflict in a holistic and comprehensive manner, as seen in a number of its thematic debates. The Council has also spotlighted various situations exacerbated by a combination of complex challenges when discussing specific countries and regions. Building upon past discussions, this open debate provided an opportunity for Member States to discuss how the Council can better address today’s complex contemporary threats and challenges to international peace and security in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

At the outset of the debate, the Secretary-General, who participated as a briefer, shared his vision of how the United Nations, in particular the Council, can effectively address complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security. Representatives from 55 Member States and the European Union participated in the open debate and shared their views on the issue. Almost all affirmed the importance of addressing those challenges and of continuing discussions, building upon the views expressed in this open debate.

The present document, compiled by the delegation of Japan, is an informal summary of the views expressed by the participants during the open debate, and does not constitute or replace an official record. It is the hope of the Japanese delegation that this summary will serve as a reference in continued discussions on the role of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. A full record of the debate is available on the website of the Security Council (see [S/PV.8144](#)).

#### **Briefing by the Secretary-General**

Addressing the Council, the Secretary-General made the point that the world was seeing not only a quantitative but also a qualitative change in the nature of threats to international peace and security. The perils of nuclear weapons were again front and centre, with tensions higher than during the cold war. Climate change was a threat multiplier, water scarcity was a growing source of concern, inequality and exclusion were feeding frustration and marginalization, and cybersecurity dangers were escalating. Conflicts were becoming more intractable, longer and more complex, as they were also becoming regionalized, internationalized and linked to one another.

He made the point that the changing nature of conflict meant that approaches should be rethought. The efforts of the United Nations must be coherent, coordinated and context-specific, working across pillars and the peace continuum towards integrated action. He set forth his three interlinked reform efforts, aimed at repositioning the United Nations development system, streamlining internal management and strengthening the Secretariat’s peace and security architecture in

order to achieve that goal. He also spoke of his efforts to forge closer links with regional partners.

He stated that prevention must be at the centre of everything the United Nations did, as it would avoid human suffering and even save money. He stressed that prevention was a sound investment, bringing ample and visible dividends, that development was one of the best instruments of prevention, and that respect for all human rights was an essential element of prevention. Gender equality was closely linked to resilience, he said, stressing that, from conflict prevention to peacemaking and sustaining peace, women's participation was crucial to success.

The Secretary-General also stressed that the concept of "human security", which placed the individual at the centre of analysis based on a cross-sectoral understanding of insecurities, was a useful frame of reference in the context of prevention. He welcomed the Council's efforts to explore new ways to monitor and address the risks of conflict, and underscored the importance for the Council of expanding the toolbox, increasing resources for prevention, and being more systematic in avoiding conflict and sustaining peace.

He emphasized the need for unity in the Council. Without unity, the parties to conflict might take more inflexible and intransigent positions, and the drivers of conflict might push situations to the point of no return. "With unity, we can advance security and well-being for all," he emphasized.

### **How the Security Council can better address complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security**

While participants recognized the principal responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, they expressed a variety of opinions and positions as to how it could better address complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security, as outlined below.

#### *Emergence of complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security*

Participants acknowledged the emergence of complex contemporary challenges, many of which were cross-border in nature, such as inter-State/ethnic/religious conflict, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of small arms and light weapons, the expansion of terrorism and violent extremism, violations of human rights, climate change, pandemics, transnational organized crime, including trafficking in drugs and persons, growing inequality, food insecurity, poverty and underdevelopment. Many emphasized that the increasing influence of more complex, interlinked and mutually reinforcing threats to international peace and security could not be ignored. Some addressed in depth specific challenges to peace and security, such as climate change, water scarcity and cyberthreats.

#### *Approach of the Security Council*

Participants underlined that the Security Council should take a more comprehensive and integrated approach to the aforementioned challenges by embracing the idea of the peace continuum and interlinkages between peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian elements. Some referred to the peace and security, development and humanitarian nexus, while others spoke simply of the security and development nexus or the nexus between the security, development, human rights and humanitarian spheres. In that regard, a broad range of the participants highlighted the need to prioritize prevention and sustaining peace. Some stressed the relevance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a tool for prevention. Others said that the human security approach was highly relevant in addressing complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security.

The importance of human rights and international humanitarian law was also emphasized by many participants.

Many participants stressed that the Council should not shy away from examining emerging challenges to peace and security and expand its agenda to include challenges such as climate change, development and human rights. Some, however, stressed that each body at the United Nations must respect the mandate of other organs, and that integrating all factors should not come under the mandate of the Council.

Some participants welcomed the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and the publication of the “Green Book”, and others stressed the importance of listening carefully to the voices of non-Council members.

#### *Cooperation between the Security Council and other actors*

Many participants stressed the importance for the Council of enhancing cooperation and coordination with other organizations within and outside the United Nations, including regional and subregional organizations. Some underlined the importance of effective cooperation between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, while others also mentioned the importance of cooperation with the International Criminal Court in order to end impunity for serious international crimes. The need to collaborate with international development and financial institutions was also mentioned.

There were also requests that more analytical reports be provided to the Council regarding various threats and situations on the ground based on interlinkages between peace, security, development and human rights, as well as the mandates of peace missions.

Several participants also pointed out the importance of engaging a broader range of actors, such as the private sector, civil society and non-governmental organizations, in peacebuilding and sustainable development.

#### *Use of existing tools and the importance of a gender perspective*

Various participants stressed that the Security Council had tools to better implement its leading role in international peace and security, including peacekeeping operations, subsidiary bodies of the Council and panels of experts of the sanctions committees, and underlined the need to adapt the mandates of peacekeeping operations to the reality on the ground and to work better with the Peacebuilding Commission. Some also underlined the importance of integrating a gender perspective into long-term strategies.

#### *The Secretary-General’s reform of the Secretariat to reinforce the United Nations peace and security architecture*

Many participants expressed support for the efforts of the Secretary-General to reform the peace and security architecture and make the United Nations more transparent, effective, accountable, nimble and field-focused. In that context, some stated that reform of the Security Council was also necessary.