Security Council

Letter dated 6 August 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of the Republic of Poland, the Security Council is scheduled to hold a ministerial debate on the subject "Maintenance of international peace and security: challenges to peace and security in the Middle East" on Tuesday, 20 August 2019. To help guide the discussion during the event, Poland has prepared the attached concept note (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council in connection with the item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security".

(*Signed*) Joanna **Wronecka**
Ambassador

Annex to the letter dated 6 August 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council debate on the subject "Maintenance of international peace and security: challenges to peace and security in the Middle East", to be held on 20 August 2019

Introduction

Throughout centuries, the Middle East has contributed to our common history and civilization. Taking into consideration its human capital, in particular young generations and their aspirations, it is vital to address the challenges to peace and security in the region. The concurrence of ethnic, religious and ideological fractures has resulted in an escalation of political tensions, which have grown into open military conflicts and terrorist activities. Poland proposes that the Security Council hold a debate on the subject "Maintenance of international peace and security: challenges to peace and security in the Middle East" on 20 August 2019. The aim of the debate is to reflect upon ways of easing tensions, caused by the recent developments in the Persian Gulf and other events, and to contribute constructively to conflict resolution in the region.

Background

The developments in the Middle East have been at the centre of attention of the international community for decades. Their ramifications reach far beyond the borders of the affected countries, undermining regional peace and security. Given their complexity and the great number of actors involved, finding a political solution to modern conflicts has proved extremely difficult.

As a result of ongoing conflicts, we are witnessing a number of humanitarian crises in the region. These humanitarian challenges can be addressed only through international cooperation and only if all sides comply with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law. Only political resolutions combining meaningful reconciliation processes with genuine political, economic, and security reforms can lead to a lasting peace.

Objectives of the debate

Highlighting the relevance of a discussion on the overall stabilization of the Middle East and finding solutions to the region's key challenges remain the most pressing objectives for ensuring international peace and security. It is important to examine the challenges faced by Middle Eastern countries from a horizontal perspective to address the root causes of crises. For all that to happen, it is in the interest of the international community to underline the leading role of the United Nations, including the Security Council, in negotiations and peace processes in the Middle East.

The main aim of the debate is to discuss practical measures to tackle the challenges with emphasis placed on:

- **Importance of respecting international law, in particular international humanitarian and human rights law with regard to the ongoing conflicts as well as to combating terrorism**. It is crucial to emphasize the negative consequences that conflicts in the region have on broader societies affected by the ensuing violence. Our top priority is to provide civilians, including children,

women, persons with disabilities, and members of religious minorities with full, timely, safe and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance as the urbanization of warfare has taken a heavy toll on them. It is also important to further enhance protection of human rights of detained and sentenced persons.

- **Underlining that the risk of any armed conflict could hamper regional stability/state systems and cause refugee/migrant flows**. Restoring social peace and economic growth must be treated as a sine qua non condition for ensuring post-conflict stability. There has been much discussion on structural reforms but rather limited cohesive commitment to action. Entrepreneurship is key to addressing social issues. Uneven distribution of wealth creates social inequality and distorts the economies. The most vulnerable groups – women, children, persons with disabilities and members of religious minorities – should be protected. In addition, strengthening good governance, tackling corruption, promoting economic and social inclusion, and just delivery of basic services will contribute to restoring stability in post-conflict areas as well as preventing radicalization and conflict resurgence.

- **Ensuring an appropriate level of education in conflict and post-conflict areas to provide their societies with better social and economic opportunities**. As a result of ongoing conflicts in the region, a generation of children, in particular girls, was denied an opportunity to learn and develop their skills, which is necessary in order to become productive members of society. The lack of educational and socializing roles provided by schools in their lives limits the opportunities to find employment and may generate radicalization.

- **Emphasizing the necessity to preserve cultural heritage in order to cultivate identities**. The Middle East has been particularly affected by damages to its historical sites as a result of conflicts. Commitment to protecting the rich and multifaceted culture of the region is an important condition for peaceful coexistence. Efforts to safeguard tangible and intangible heritage help develop interreligious and intercultural dialogue which constitutes a vital platform for reconciliation.

- **Discussing how to confront threats posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and advanced conventional systems among State and non-State actors**. It is necessary to improve compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, assure its further universalization, as well as foster more global measures in the fight against terrorism with the use of existing international tools. The sense of insecurity and instability in the region affects the debate on security policy. It is indispensable to create efficient regional dispute resolution mechanisms and confidence-building measures to build and maintain confidence in different phases of conflicts. To this end, we should draw from the experiences and best practices of regional organizations, for example, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Questions for consideration

- What are the root causes of tensions in the Middle East threatening regional and international peace and how could they be tackled by the United Nations?

- How to expand and reinforce confidence-building measures in the Middle East and what should be the role of the Security Council and other actors from outside the region?

- How to prevent socioeconomic grievances from spreading? How to unlock a potential for development of the Middle East in terms of water, natural

resources, employment regulations, agriculture and the quality of institutions? How to respond effectively to global challenges such as climate change, which fuel local tensions and thus represent a security risk? How to ensure that women fully participate in political, social and economic life and benefit equally from the resources? What practical aspects of development policies and technical cooperation could be considered to foster overall stabilization of the Middle East and find solutions to the region's key challenges?

• How to address the concerns over proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the region? How to ensure accountability of persons and State or non-State actors responsible for violating the rules regarding the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the norms of international law? What should be done to strengthen maritime and aviation security in the Middle East?

• Which practical measures could be applied to respond to various aspects of current terrorist activities in the region, including safe havens, access to new technologies, financial networks and propaganda?

• How to counteract cyber threats, including threats to energy infrastructure, in terms of promoting cooperative mechanisms for deterring and responding to significant cyber incidents in the Middle East?

• What are the ways to gain greater support for the United Nations to ensure comprehensive humanitarian aid in post-conflict areas and in areas still affected by armed conflicts as well as how to coordinate collective measures with individual efforts made by Member States?

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