



Open debate on the implementation of S/2006/507

New York, 22 April 2010

BENELUX (BELGIUM – NETHERLANDS – LUXEMBOURG)

Mr. President,

I have the honor to address the Council on behalf of the BENELUX countries, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

First of all, I would like to thank the President of the Security Council for convening this debate and for his enduring commitment to enhance the working methods and procedures of the Security Council.

As emphasized in the concept paper for today's debate, Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations mandates the Security Council to take prompt and effective action to maintain international peace and security on behalf of all Member States. In order to deal with this responsibility, the Security Council has adopted and should continue to adopt a pragmatic and incremental approach when it comes to improving its working methods.

In August 2008 Belgium organized the last open debate on Security Council working methods and procedures during its Presidency of the Security Council. At that moment in time it was decided to focus the debate on three, closely interrelated, issues: transparency, interaction and efficiency.

Concerning transparency, the Benelux welcomes the fact that many efforts have been made to increase the transparency of the Security Council's work. For example, last year's resolution 1904, which renewed the mandate of the Al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Monitoring Team, increased considerably the transparency of the process for listing and delisting. The creation of an Office of the Ombudsperson furthers increases transparency, efficiency and interaction. We therefore hope an Ombudsperson will be appointed shortly.

With respect to the issue of access or interaction with non-Council members we would like to make a number of remarks:

- (1) First, as a general rule, we believe that the deliberations of Council Members would be enriched if there were even more interaction with States and non-State actors associated with a conflict. This is especially important in the early stages of the consultations and should include private meetings. We welcome new formats like “informal interactive discussions” and “informal interactive dialogue”.

In the case of non-State actors, it is the Council’s prerogative to decide which of these requests it is to grant and in which specific situation. However, we believe the parties to a conflict should be able to submit their views to the Council in writing, which may decide to distribute them as Security Council documents. We further believe that interaction with non-state actors under the ARRIA formula is commendable and deserves further encouragement.

- (2) Secondly, given the increasing importance and involvement of regional and sub-regional organizations in dealing with challenges of peace and security, we believe the Security Council benefits from enhanced cooperation with such organizations, both in public as in private deliberations. Furthermore, the fact that regional organizations represent the views of a larger group of Member States can contribute to shorter and more efficient debates, at least when these organizations are allowed to intervene early on in the debate.
- (3) Finally, the Benelux-countries are a strong proponent of further strengthening the PBC-Security Council relation. We welcome the fact that the PBC Chairperson or the Chairs of the Country-Specific configurations of the PBC are regularly invited to brief the Council. We are convinced that the PBC and its country-specific configurations could also bring added value to the work of the Council in thematic areas, such as ‘women and peace building’, ‘children and armed conflict’ and the ‘future of peacekeeping’.

On efficiency, the BENELUX countries agree with several of the ideas presented by the S-5, in particular that key provisions of thematic resolutions could be incorporated into country specific resolutions, this would also be a matter of coherence. The Council could as well reflect on how best to assess whether its decisions are implemented, analyze obstacles to implementation and suggest mechanisms to enhance implementation.

The proposals just mentioned could be established by the Security Council without delay. However, the responsibility for the improvement of the relationship with the wider membership relies not only upon the Security Council. It is up to each of us to optimally use all means for interaction at hand. The debate of today presents an opportunity for feedback from the wider membership to the Security Council and vice versa in order to improve mutual understanding.

We thank Japan for its readiness to ensure a follow-up to this debate in the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which it chairs. We would indeed welcome an update of note S/2006/507.

Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg will remain constructively engaged in the process of improving the Security Council’s working methods.