

[Extract]

United Nations

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Security Council

Sixty-third year

5968th meeting

Wednesday, 27 August 2008, 10:25 a.m.

New York

[...]

***Implementation of the note
by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507)***

Mr. Ambassador Ricardo Alberto Arias

Permanent Representative of Panama to the United Nations

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, permit me to thank you, Mr. President, and your delegation for the holding of this public debate on a topic of particular importance to my delegation. We are confident that your dedication and leadership will ensure that our deliberations today will have concrete results that will optimize the Council's work. We also highlight the Secretary-General's presence at this debate, which clearly shows the Organization's commitment to promoting the effectiveness and efficiency of the Security Council. In addition, I wish to acknowledge the efforts of the Small Five group, in particular Ambassador Urbina and the delegation of Costa Rica, to promote this debate.

The Security Council's working methods are not an end in themselves, but one of the ways to ensure that the Council fulfils, as efficiently and effectively as possible, the obligations and responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations. Before making a few specific comments, we believe we should point out that the Security Council, because it is an organ whose membership is limited, will always have a problem of representativity. What is more, today it is generally accepted that the Council does not reflect current socio-political realities. That lack of representativity means that the

Council's working methods must be aimed at, inter alia, correcting that deficiency to the extent possible.

From that perspective, we shall analyse a number of the topics that, concerning the implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507), have been presented in the current presidency's concept paper (S/2008/528) and that we believe to be of particular importance. With regard to the holding of Council meetings, it is important to note that article 48 of the provisional rules of procedure states that the Security Council, unless it decides otherwise, should meet in public. In Panama's opinion, unless there are important reasons justifying the opposite, all Member States should be allowed unconditional access to Council meetings. That alone would contribute significantly to the transparency of the Council's work, its interaction with Member States and, hence, its effectiveness. Likewise, it is vital that the Secretariat's reports be disseminated to all Member States in a timely manner.

Furthermore, the Council's effectiveness depends on the appropriateness of its decisions and on their due implementation. To that end, it is particularly important that the Council take its decisions after it has become thoroughly familiar with the relevant situations and their consequences. In order to gain such a level of understanding, it is necessary to know and understand the views of each and every country that could be affected by the Council's decisions. Such Council consultations should be broadened to permit greater participation in the Council's deliberations by persons or groups other than Member States. In addition, such consultations should be held as often as required. In particular, however, they should be held sufficiently in advance so that they can achieve the desired goal of informing the Council's decisions.

In that context, it should be pointed out that the adoption of the mechanism known as the Arria Formula meeting was a significant step forward in the process of enhancing the transparency of the Council's work. The Arria Formula must now be formalized and broadened with a view to greater participation. That principle applies both to the Council and to its subsidiary bodies. In that connection, Panama wishes to reaffirm its support for the practice of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict of inviting to its meetings countries affected by its decisions, as an example to be followed by all subsidiary bodies of the Security Council. We believe that that practice has particular relevance for the Counter-Terrorism Committee as a subsidiary body.

Finally, Panama would like to reiterate that the thematic debates of the Security Council should be aimed principally at discussing matters under the Council's consideration and informing the Council as to the positions of Member States in that regard, and that such debates should not serve as a way for Member States to air their views on general issues. There are other, more appropriate forums for that purpose, in particular the General Assembly. In conclusion, I should like to reiterate our position that the Security Council's working methods are not an end in themselves, but one of the ways to ensure that the Council can carry out the duties and responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter.