



Security Council

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Letter dated 30 December 2022 from the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, containing an account of the Informal Working Group's activities from 1 January to 31 December 2022. The report, which was approved by the Informal Working Group, is being submitted further to the agreement of its members.

I should be grateful if the present letter and the report were brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Ferit **Hoxha**
Chair

Informal Working Group of the Security Council on
Documentation and Other Procedural Questions



Report of the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions

I. Introduction

1. The present report of the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions constitutes the first annual report of the Informal Working Group since its creation in 1993 and covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2022.
2. The Bureau of the Informal Working Group consisted of Ferit Hoxha (Albania) as Chair and a representative of the United Arab Emirates as Vice-Chair.

II. Organizational matters

3. The Informal Working Group was established in 1993 with a view to improving the process by which the Security Council addresses issues concerning its documentation and other procedural questions. The Working Group meets as agreed by the members of the Security Council and makes recommendations, proposals and suggestions in that connection.
4. From 1993 until 2006, the Informal Working Group was chaired by the delegation holding the monthly presidency of the Council. From 2006 onwards,¹ the chairmanship was assigned to a single Member State for periods ranging from one to two years. In 2007, Slovakia was elected for the first time as the Chair of the Working Group for a period of 12 months.² Subsequently, the Informal Working Group was chaired by Panama (2008), Japan (2009–2010), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2011), Portugal (2012), Argentina (2013–2014), Angola (2015), Japan (2016–2017), Kuwait (2018–2019) and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (2020–2021).³

III. Summary of the activities of the Informal Working Group

5. During the reporting period, the Informal Working Group held five meetings, on 18 March, 6 May, 22 July, 11 November and 22 December, as well as an informal retreat in Tirana, Albania, from 5 to 7 October 2022. Furthermore, in connection with the work of the Informal Working Group, the Council held the annual open debate on its working methods on 28 June 2022.⁴
6. In 2022, all meetings of the Informal Working Group included a standing agenda item entitled “Strengthening and advancing the implementation of the note by the President of 30 August 2017” (S/2017/507) (“note 507”), under which the presidencies of the Council gave briefings to the Group on the actions and

¹ Pursuant to the note by the President of the Security Council dated 31 January 2006 (S/2006/66), the Informal Working Group decided to review its practice regarding the chairmanship with a view to aligning it with that of other working groups of the Council. The chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions was held by Japan from 1 February to 31 December 2006.

² See S/2007/20.

³ The bureau of the Informal Working Group did not include a Vice-Chair until 2013 (S/2013/2).

⁴ See S/PV.9079 and S/PV.9079 (Resumption 1), the letter dated 21 June 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2022/499) and the letter dated 28 June 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2022/519).

commitments that they had undertaken on working methods and elaborated on proposals for future action.

7. At its first meeting of the year on 18 March, the Informal Working Group discussed the programme of work for 2022 prepared by the Chair, which would include the holding of the annual open debate on working methods in June, a retreat in October 2022 and the preparation of the first annual report on the activities of the Group. In line with the priorities outlined by the Chair for 2022, the members of the Informal Working Group discussed the possible establishment of a monitoring mechanism to track the implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council of 30 August 2017 (S/2017/507) (“note 507”) and the subsequent notes by the President on working methods, as well as how to mainstream gender into the working methods of the Council and improve the process for the selection of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of subsidiary bodies. The members of the Informal Working Group welcomed the proposed annual programme of work and priorities defined for 2022. Several delegations raised the importance of more in-depth discussions on the issue of penholdership.

8. Under the standing agenda item on strengthening and advancing the implementation of note 507, the Group heard briefings by Norway, the Russian Federation and the United Arab Emirates on the working methods implemented during their respective presidencies in January, February and March 2022.

9. On 6 May, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland gave a briefing to the Informal Working Group on the working methods implemented during its presidency in April, while the United States of America outlined its working methods priorities for May 2022. On the basis of a set of possible key indicators prepared by the Security Council Affairs Division at the request of the Chair, the Group discussed the feasibility of a monitoring mechanism on the implementation of note 507 and subsequent presidential notes. Members underscored the importance of ensuring the full implementation of the presidential notes and exchanged views on the possible scope and format of the mechanism, including the use of information and research tools periodically prepared by the Security Council Affairs Division. As a follow-up to the discussions during the previous meeting, held on 18 March, the Chair proposed that the Group’s annual report be adopted by consensus.

10. On 28 June, during the presidency of Albania, the Council held its annual open debate on its working methods, under the item entitled “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)”.⁵ Council members received a briefing by the Director of Security Council Procedure and co-author of *The Procedure of the United Nations Security Council*, Loraine Sievers, and the Executive Director of Security Council Report, Karin Landgren. In addition to Council members, statements were delivered by 35 Member States. The discussion was focused on a variety of topics, including on how to increase efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and inclusivity in the work of the Council.⁶

11. On 22 July, the Informal Working Group heard briefings by the United States and Albania, which had held the presidency of the Council in May and June 2022, respectively. Following the briefings, the Chair and members of the Group exchanged views on the draft presidential note that had been circulated at the beginning of that month on the mainstreaming of gender into the working methods of the Council further to the note by the President of the Security Council of 27 December 2019

⁵ See S/PV.9079 and S/PV.9079 (Resumption 1).

⁶ See letter dated 10 November 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2022/842).

(S/2019/996) and the practice of the Council in 2021. The draft note was not adopted owing to a lack of consensus.

12. The Informal Working Group exchanged views on the Council's practice regarding the access of elected members to confidential and preparatory documentation of the Council, including the confidential documentation of subsidiary bodies, predating their membership. Some members stressed the importance of elected members having unrestricted access to confidential documentation prior to their membership as a means of ensuring equality among all members and increasing the Council's efficiency. Others highlighted the need for consideration of the practical and cost implications, the sensitivity of the documents covered and the implications for the future sharing of information with the Council. Council members exchanged views on the practice of penholdership, including the drafting of all documents that would allow participation of all members of the Council and to engage in timely consultations with all Council members with openness and flexibility; equitable distribution of labour among all members and inclusivity in the decision-making process, as provided in note 507. Members of the Group also exchanged views on enhancing civil society participation in Council meetings.

13. From 5 to 7 October, as the Chair of the Informal Working Group, the delegation of Albania hosted an informal retreat in its capital, Tirana. Participants included 13 members of the Council,⁷ as well as the delegations of Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique and Switzerland, as the incoming members of the Council for the 2023–2024 term. During the two-day retreat, participants heard presentations and contributions from the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Chair of the Informal Working Group in 2020–2021, Rhonda Inga King; the Director of Security Council Procedure and co-author of *The Procedure of the United Nations Security Council*, Loraine Sievers; the Chief Operating Officer of Security Council Report, Shamala Kandiah Thompson; and representatives of the Security Council Affairs Division. Discussions in the retreat were focused on (a) transparency, efficiency and effectiveness; (b) proposals put forward at the annual open debate on the working methods of the Council; (c) the division of labour on subsidiary bodies and penholdership; (d) cooperation with other principal organs of the United Nations; and (e) the implementation of and improvements to note 507.

14. On 11 November, the Informal Working Group heard briefings by Brazil, China and France on their respective presidencies in July, August and September 2022. Further to the discussions held on 22 July and under a new sub-item related to penholdership, the penholders and co-penholders on Council resolutions, presidential statements and press statements in September and October 2022 shared their observations on the good practices and challenges faced during the negotiation and drafting process. In the subsequent discussion, members of the Group welcomed the opportunity to reflect on how penholdership was being implemented, with several of them welcoming the transparent and inclusive approach taken by recent penholders, particularly with respect to consultations with affected Member States, as well as the African members of the Council on agenda items concerning Africa. Some delegations called upon penholders to ensure that Council members were provided with sufficient time to consider draft outcome documents and to make greater efforts to maintain unity and achieve consensus during negotiations.

15. The Security Council Affairs Division gave a briefing to delegates on the information resources available on the website of the Council that could serve as tools

⁷ Albania, Brazil, France, Ghana, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

for tracking the implementation of note 507 and subsequent presidential notes.⁸ Members of the Group discussed a proposal to facilitate access to confidential documents predating membership on the Council, the importance of a handover between outgoing and incoming chairs of subsidiary bodies, as well as of informal expert groups, and enhancing the accessibility of Council press statements by making the text of press statements searchable on the website of the Security Council.

16. On 22 December 2022, the Informal Working Group heard briefings by Gabon, Ghana and India on their respective presidencies in October, November and December 2022. The Group also discussed comments on the draft report, and it was agreed that the report would be circulated for edits and feedback immediately after the meeting, to be followed by a subsequent 48-hour silence procedure for its approval and issuance. Members of the Group discussed access to documentation, specifically to letters submitted under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as to other documents through the Security Council website in all United Nations official languages. Members of the Group also discussed the proposal to distribute the list of speakers ahead of open debates, without prejudice to the Council's practice and the provisional rules of procedure.

IV. Secretariat administrative and substantive support

17. The Security Council Affairs Division provided substantive and procedural support to the Chair and the members of the Informal Working Group. At the request of the Chair, the Security Council Affairs Division prepared extensive background and briefing non-papers to familiarize members of the Informal Working Group with the existing practices of the Council relevant to the issues under discussion.

18. The Division worked with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of Information and Communications Technology of the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance to facilitate the conduct of in-person meetings.

V. Conclusion

19. During the reporting period and for the first time in its history, the Informal Working Group adopted an annual programme of work (see annex I). Within the framework of the programme of work, the Group developed its activities in execution of its mandate guided by the principles of openness, inclusivity and constructive debate, with the clear collective objective of improving the working methods of the Security Council.

20. Despite the delay in the start of the work of the Informal Working Group, the Chair made every effort to hold meetings every 6 to 8 weeks and to include on its agenda items of concern and importance for the functioning of the Security Council.

21. Culminating the many discussions on the implementation of note 507 held during the year and building on the work of previous Chairs of the Informal Working Group, the present report includes, also for the first time, a set of selected indicators (see annex II), with the goal of enhancing the awareness and improving the implementation of existing working methods of the Security Council, which was a primary goal of the Chair of the Informal Working Group for the reporting period.

⁸ See www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/research-tools.

Annex I**Programme of work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions for 2022****I. Objectives**

The Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions intends to continue the work undertaken under previous Chairs and consider a range of issues relating to the working methods of the Council, with a view to strengthening the implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council of 30 August 2017 (S/2017/507) (“note 507”) and subsequent notes by the President, and further enhancing the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Council, including the continuity of the work of the Council under extraordinary circumstances.

II. Programmed activities**A. Annual open debate on working methods, June 2022**

Under the presidency of Albania in June 2022, the Chair intends to hold an open debate on the working methods of the Council under the item “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)”. A concept note will be circulated to guide the discussion. Following previous practice, the Chair will be summarizing the statements and positions of Member States during the open debate in a letter circulated in his national capacity.

B. Retreat, third quarter of 2022

Owing to the developments in the Council during the months of February and March, the retreat of the Informal Working Group in Tirana, Albania, originally scheduled for February 2022, had to be postponed. The Chair intends to hold the retreat sometime in the third quarter of 2022. All Council members at the Political Coordinator level, accompanied by one additional delegate each, will be invited, as well as a few selected scholars and representatives from the Security Council Affairs Division. The purpose of the retreat will be to take stock of the first six months of the work of the Informal Working Group and the discussion during the annual open debate. In addition, it will also serve the original purpose of: (a) sharing ideas, positions and thoughts on advancing the working methods of the Council; and (b) identifying positive trends and practices and exploring areas of procedure and practice that may need further improvement. A revised concept note will be circulated.

C. Meetings of the Informal Working Group

The Chair intends to hold regular meetings, approximately every 6 to 7 weeks, on 18 March, 6 May, July (exact date to be determined), 30 September and 18 November, as well as an extraordinary meeting on 16 December 2022 to discuss and finalize the annual report. The dates may change subject to changes to the Security Council monthly programme of work adopted at the beginning of each month. Issues proposed to be covered will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Strengthening the implementation of note 507 and emphasizing the role of the President pursuant to note 507 and of the President and the Political Coordinators further to the notes by the President of 12 July 2021 ([S/2021/646](#) and [S/2021/647](#)).
- Considering additional measures to maintain the Council's state of readiness in extraordinary circumstances to ensure that it can function continuously in accordance with Article 28 of the Charter of the United Nations further to the note by the President of 22 December 2021 ([S/2021/1074](#)).
- Mainstreaming gender into the working methods of the Security Council further to the note by the President of 27 December 2019 ([S/2019/996](#)).
- In addition to the above, the Chair will build on the work of previous Chairs with a view to improving the mechanism for the selection of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of subsidiary organs, avoiding deadlock and ensuring the proper functioning of the Council as a whole. The Chair intends to maintain the question of intra-Council consultation and cooperation at the forefront of the agenda of the Informal Working Group with a view to ensuring a whole-of-Council participation in the process of drafting outcome documents and enhancing the transparency of the Council through press elements. Finally, the Chair will be engaging with the members of the Informal Working Group to explore possible mechanisms for greater and improved cooperation with other United Nations principal organs and the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as with regional and subregional organizations.

III. Expected outcomes

The Chair intends to issue an annual report at the conclusion of the year. The annual report will record the activities of the Informal Working Group during the year, summarize the main discussions of the Informal Working Group with regard to the implementation of note 507, as well as subsequent notes, and report on any innovations and improvements in the working methods of the Council during the year. The annual report will include an annex containing a list of all notes by the President of the Security Council concerning the working methods of the Council issued since 2017, including any notes issued in 2022.

Annex II

Selected indicators on the implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council of 30 August 2017 (S/2017/507) and subsequent notes concerning the working methods of the Security Council

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Indicator description</i>	<i>Reference documents</i>	<i>Average of the past 5 years (2017–2021)</i>	<i>Totals for 2022</i>	<i>Trend (percentage change)</i>
Efficiency					
Meetings	Number of public and private meetings per year (including open and closed videoconferences) ^a	Note by the President of the Security Council of 30 August 2017 (S/2017/507), annex, para. 3	266.8	292	+9%
	Number of informal consultations of the whole per year (including closed videoconferences) ^b	S/2017/507, annex, para. 21	135.4	127	-6%
Time management	Hours of formal meetings, informal consultations, informal interactive dialogues and videoconferences per year (including open and closed videoconferences)	S/2017/507, annex, paras. 22, 41 and 56	618.9	651.5	+5%
Dialogue with non-Council members	Number of informal interactive dialogues per year	S/2017/507, annex, para. 99	6.8	5	-26%
	Number of Arria-formula meetings per year	S/2017/507, annex, paras. 98 and 99	22.8	21	-8%
	Number of representatives of regional organizations invited to participate in meetings in accordance with rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure per year	S/2017/507, annex, para. 96	55.8	70	+25%
	Number of persons other than representatives of the United Nations and regional or international organizations invited to participate in meetings in accordance with rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure per year	S/2017/507, annex, para. 21	55.2	89	+61%
Effectiveness					
Outcome documents	Outcome documents per year (including resolutions, presidential statements, press statements)	S/2017/507, annex, para. 21 (a) and (b)	141.2	129	-9%
	Hours spent in formal meetings, informal consultations, informal interactive dialogues and videoconferences (including open and closed videoconferences) per outcome document	S/2017/507, annex, para. 21 (a) and (b)	4.4	5.8	+31%
Security Council missions	Number of Security Council missions per year	S/2017/507, annex, para. 119, and S/2019/990	2.8	–	-100%
Transparency					
Annual report	Monthly assessments per year	S/2017/507, annex, para. 136	8	5	-38%
Programme of work	Wrap-up sessions per year	S/2017/507, annex, para. 7, and S/2019/994	10.2	10	-2%

^a In 2020 and 2021, videoconferences, whether open or closed, were not considered formal meetings of the Council. Included in this figure are closed videoconferences that took place in 2020 and 2021 analogous to private meetings.

^b In 2020 and 2021, while videoconferences were not considered formal meetings of the Council, included in this figure are closed videoconferences that took place in 2020 and 2021 analogous to informal consultations.

Annex III**List of notes by the President of the Security Council concerning the working methods of the Council issued since 2017**

1. Note by the President of the Security Council of 30 August 2017 ([S/2017/507](#))
 2. Note by the President of the Security Council of 27 December 2019 ([S/2019/990](#))
 3. Note by the President of the Security Council of 27 December 2019 ([S/2019/991](#))
 4. Note by the President of the Security Council of 27 December 2019 ([S/2019/992](#))
 5. Note by the President of the Security Council of 27 December 2019 ([S/2019/993](#))
 6. Note by the President of the Security Council of 27 December 2019 ([S/2019/994](#))
 7. Note by the President of the Security Council of 27 December 2019 ([S/2019/995](#))
 8. Note by the President of the Security Council of 27 December 2019 ([S/2019/996](#))
 9. Note by the President of the Security Council of 27 December 2019 ([S/2019/997](#))
 10. Note by the President of the Security Council of 12 July 2021 ([S/2021/645](#))
 11. Note by the President of the Security Council of 12 July 2021 ([S/2021/646](#))
 12. Note by the President of the Security Council of 12 July 2021 ([S/2021/647](#))
 13. Note by the President of the Security Council of 12 July 2021 ([S/2021/648](#))
 14. Note by the President of the Security Council of 22 December 2021 ([S/2021/1074](#))
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