

Security Council Open Debate, 23 October 2014
Implementation of the Note S/2010/507 (Working methods)
Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) statement
delivered by H. E. Mr. Paul Seger,
Permanent Representative of Switzerland
on behalf of the Group

Madam President,

I am pleased to take the floor in my capacity as the Coordinator of ACT, a cross-regional group of 23 states.

ACT is currently composed of Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Maldives, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania and Uruguay.

ACT stands for Accountability, Coherence and Transparency and focuses on the Security Council in its present composition. Our efforts have therefore remained independent from the comprehensive Security Council reform process

In my intervention on behalf of ACT, I will focus on four points in particular while other members of ACT will complement or elaborate on these or other elements. The four points are:

1. The progress achieved in the area of working methods of the Security Council
2. The use of the veto
3. The means for increasing the preventive role of the Security Council and
4. The process for nominating the next Secretary-General of the United Nations

At the outset, ACT would like to recognize the efforts of Argentina for capably steering the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and for organizing today's debate.

Moreover, ACT commends the IWGD for its work leading to the adoption during the last year of five Presidential Notes, all building on previous Council decisions.

In particular, ACT welcomes the commitment reiterated to continue the practice of using wrap up meetings and informal briefing sessions. Indeed since last year's debate on working methods, ten of the twelve presidencies have held wrap-up and/or briefings at the end of their presidencies—these being of great relevance to the broader membership. ACT especially welcomes the efforts of five elected members and one permanent member of the Council who organized a formal session of wrap-up in the Chamber, twice in the format of a public briefing; in four cases it was also followed by an exchange with the wider membership.

Much progress has been achieved during the last year. However there is still a long road ahead of us, and ACT invites the Security Council to continue enhancing the measures concerning working methods and implement them. ACT encourages the Council to monitor and report consistently on the implementation of these measures, through the IWGD and in cooperation with the Secretariat. Moreover, ACT calls for the implementation without delay of Presidential Note 268 (S/2014/268) on enhancing the wider participation and inclusiveness of Council members in the work of the Council and Note 393 (S/2014/393) on ensuring continuity in the work of the subsidiary bodies.

Today's debate on **working methods** is the fifth in what has become, since 2010, an annual practice. The format of meetings of the Council is a key element of access. ACT hence welcomes the efforts of the Council to hold meetings in the open—in 2013 only approximately 55% of the sessions were public—and especially open debates allowing the participation of the wider membership. This format is of particular importance in order for the Council to receive recommendations from non-members willing to contribute to the discussion. However the response of the Council remains in most cases very limited, and products are adopted before the views of the wider membership are even heard.

In this regard, today's open debate on working methods can contribute to shifting this practice: ACT encourages the Council to take note of the recommendations given by all States participating in today's debate and provide the wider membership, by the end of the year, with a summary of the recommendations. This document could serve as guidance for the work of the IWGD in the coming year. On the same note, ACT would encourage the IWGD to hold a meeting in the format of an open debate in 2015.

Madam President,

One of the priorities of ACT concerns the **use of veto in case of mass atrocities**. ACT has advocated a use of the veto consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. Our group was therefore pleased that France has taken up an idea which many of us have advocated for years: that the permanent members of the Security Council voluntarily commit to refraining from using the veto to block Council action aimed at preventing or ending atrocity crimes. Genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes are the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole. While we believe that a commitment from all members of the Council to this end is appropriate, a special responsibility falls to the permanent members of the Security Council since they have the authority to take appropriate measures to restore international peace and security and can thus prevent or stop such crimes.

The event at the International Peace Institute (IPI) on March 31 organized by France and Liechtenstein as well as the High Level Ministerial Event *Framing the use of the veto in the face of massive crimes* organized by France and Mexico on September 25 have both been important milestones. However, our group is convinced that now is the time to progress towards concrete measures, including the early finalization of a code of conduct to commit to refraining from the use of the veto in situations of mass atrocities.

ACT is composed of sub-groups, one of which advocates for a more consistent approach to issues of criminal accountability for international crimes. Over the last years, the Security Council has made some progress in improving its interaction with the International Criminal Court and other related issues, largely due to the initiative of individual delegations or in response to pressing events. However the lack of follow-up to referrals by the Security Council remains a matter of concern. ACT will continue to call for more consistent follow-up, including through the creation of a subsidiary body to address issues related to the ICC, addressing issues of non-cooperation and mainstreaming of justice consideration in relevant mandates.

ACT has also advocated for adopting a more **conflict prevention perspective** in the work of the Security Council. ACT welcomes resolution 2171 (2014) in which the Security Council committed itself to better utilizing all tools of the UN system to ensure that warning signs of a crisis would be taken into consideration and translated into concrete and preventive action. This resolution reaffirmed the preventive value of numerous tools, notably sanctions, special political missions, peacekeeping operations and human rights mechanisms.

Also on prevention, I would like to emphasize the importance of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), as an intergovernmental advisory body of the Council: the Commission has indeed a strong role to play in preventing the recurrence of conflicts. Roughly half of all countries coming out of conflict suffer a relapse into violence. Recent crises in the Central African Republic and South Sudan are painful reminders of that.

A coordinated and committed approach to post-conflict peacebuilding is therefore key to prevent such fall-backs into conflict. Our group is convinced that the Peacebuilding Commission can assume the role of a forum where critical situations are discussed early, in an inclusive manner and with all relevant stakeholders. The upcoming 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture is a valuable opportunity to implement necessary adaptations to further improve this role of the PBC. Finally we encourage the Council to invite the chairs of the various country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission to participate in Council meetings.

In closing, I would like to mention a topic that will be crucial for all of us, namely the **appointment of the next Secretary-General** in 2016. Repeated calls for more transparency and involvement of the General Assembly in the appointment process have been made in the past and are legitimate since the Secretary-General represents the whole UN membership.

ACT is hence of the opinion that the transparency of the overall process as well as the implementation of the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly should be enhanced. This will mean listening to the views of Member States and widening the scope of consultations beyond the permanent members. ACT intends to embark in a constructive dialogue both with the Security Council and the General Assembly on the enhancement of the transparency and inclusiveness of the selection of the future Secretary-General.

Madam President,

Your Council acts on our behalf. This is why accountability, coherence and transparency in its work and in the implementation of its own decisions, are crucial.

To this end, be sure that the ACT group remains committed to continue working constructively with the Security Council, and with the wider membership, to increase the involvement of the non-members and the accountability of the Council to fulfill *on the ground* its primary responsibility, the maintenance of international peace and security.

Thank you, Mrs. President.