

Statement by Ambassador Barbalić during the “Briefings by Chairmen of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council” meeting held on 14 December 2011

As outgoing Chair, I am pleased to brief the members of the Council on the activities of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Bosnia and Herzegovina has continued the efforts of previous Chairs to further promote the transparency and efficiency of the Council’s work, including the implementation of presidential note S/2006/507.

This year, the Informal Working Group held five meetings in which the members considered issues such as streamlining summary statements, redistributing items on the Security Council’s yearly programme, and ways of enhancing interaction between the Informal Working Group and the wider membership. At the beginning and in the later part of the year, the Informal Working Group considered the issue of streamlining summary statements of matters of which the Council is seized. In that context, we examined possible means for reducing the items on the list under the Council’s active consideration. This is not an easy task, since it has to be carried out with extreme care vis-à-vis the countries concerned. This ongoing process will be addressed in January 2012.

In addition, the Informal Working Group focused on redistribution of reporting and mandate cycles in order to create a more even distribution of the Council’s annual workload. It is clearly apparent, for example, that June, July and December are more densely scheduled than other months. We are of the view that this exercise will be an important contribution to improving the Council’s working methods. The Informal Working Group was briefed by the Council’s secretariat branch and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the administrative, financial and political implications of redistributing the mandate cycles of peacekeeping missions.

Taking note of the views expressed, we believe that the exercise will take 18 months to implement, with close coordination among Security Council members, Member States and the Secretariat. As the outgoing Chair, we warmly invite the incoming Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions to build upon the work initiated in that regard.

With a view to improving and, in a way, demystifying some practices of the Security Council, we organized what we called a “special meeting” of the Informal Working Group, at which the Security Council Secretariat Branch briefed members on the unknown or misunderstood working methods of the Security Council. We also had a presentation by the Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch on the Security Council repertoire website. The repertoire is a record of the proceedings of the Security Council that serves as an institutional memory of the evolving practice of the Council on constitutional and procedural matters.

As I mentioned previously, one of the principal issues that the Informal Working Group has been engaged in is the issue of further increasing the transparency of the Council's work. Thus, together with Japan, the preceding Informal Working Group Chair, we organized a workshop on working methods for the general United Nations membership, where we introduced the new 507 President's note (S/2010/507), comparing it to the old 507 note (S/2006/507). Also, as Chair of the Informal Working Group, I participated in the meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly, at which we shared the Council's experience and good practices in the domain of documentation, working methods and organization of work, with a focus on summary statement streamlining.

Based on the past year's experience, I would like to conclude by highlighting two recommendations for the future activities of the Working Group. Bosnia and Herzegovina believes that, in the future, the primary focus should be on the following areas. First, taking note of the increased number of calls for interaction between the Informal Working Group and the wider membership, Bosnia and Herzegovina has suggested that the Group hold regular briefings on Security Council working methods for non-members of the Council. With pleasure, I can confirm the members' dedication to more transparent relations with the wider membership. Therefore, we intend to organize the first such briefing in a week's time. We are convinced that such interaction is to the common benefit. Secondly, it is of vital importance that the redistribution of reporting and mandate cycles initiated by Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a priority on the agenda of the Working Group next year.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to all members of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions for their constructive approach and cooperative spirit.