

Statement by H.E. Mr. Kenzo Oshima, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, as outgoing Chairman of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, at the 5601st meeting of the Security Council, on “Briefings by Chairmen of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council”, New York – 20 December 2006

“[...] I should like now to address the issue of working methods in my capacity as Chairman of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions. At the beginning of this year, the Council agreed to revitalize its Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions in the belief that there was a need to further improve Security Council working methods and procedures. This also matched the larger membership’s concern at, and strong interest in, this issue, as reflected in paragraph 154 of the 2005 Summit Outcome Document. In the Outcome Document, our leaders stated that the Security Council should continue to adapt its working methods so as to increase the involvement of States not members of the Council in its work in order to enhance its accountability to the membership and increase the transparency of its work. It was agreed earlier this year that part of the revitalization effort should begin with a change in the way in which the chairmanship of this Working Group functioned. In lieu of the old practice, whereby the chairmanship rotated with the monthly presidency, the Council decided to appoint a Chair with a term of office lasting several months. That change had the advantage of making it easier for the Working Group to function in a more focused and consistent manner. Japan was appointed as Chair until the end of June, an appointment that was eventually extended through December this year.

Between March and July 2006, the Working Group met 11 times and examined various proposals on two categories of issues. The first group of issues relates to the Council’s own internal work, with a view to increasing its efficiency. The second group of issues relates to the Council’s relationship with non-members. As a result of the discussions, the Working Group produced a set of recommendations to be presented to the Council for its approval. Those recommendations included, for ease of reference, the agreements on working methods that already are in place, some of which go as far back as 1993, as well

as newly agreed or updated measures for improvement. The Council eventually approved the recommendations of the Working Group, which are contained in a note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507). In the latter half of the year, the Working Group continued its discussions, mainly on two issues: first, the procedure for conducting Arria-formula meetings, and, secondly, ways of promoting the implementation of the recommendations contained in the note by the President. With regard to holding Arria-formula meetings, which had been the practice for some years, members of the Council requested the Working Group in September 2006 to discuss the appropriate way to conduct the meetings, believing that there was a need for some clarity on this aspect. In response to that request, the Working Group met twice and reached a common understanding on the conduct of Arria-formula meetings, which I shall now present orally. There are four points. First, the members of the Security Council are encouraged to plan Arria-formula meetings, in accordance with paragraph 54 of the note by the President of the Security Council in document S/2006/507, and to take part in such meetings. Secondly, the content of the background note on Arria-formula meetings prepared by the Secretariat in 2002 provides a useful description of current and past practices relating to Arria-formula meetings, and the members are encouraged to utilize the background note as a guideline, without undermining the flexibility of Arria-formula meetings. Thirdly, any member of the Security Council convening an Arria-formula meeting is encouraged to carefully organize the meeting so as to maintain its informal character. Fourthly, any member of the Security Council convening an Arria-formula meeting should inform all participating Security Council members about the planned procedures for and participation in the meeting, and is encouraged to do so well in advance. Those are the four points on Arria-formula meetings. With regard to promoting the implementation of the recommendations contained in the note, the Chair felt it useful to prepare a non-paper in which various agreed recommendations are reconfigured so as to allow prospective users, such as the President of the Security Council and members of subsidiary bodies, some ease of reference. The non-paper has already been distributed to the members of the Council and will be included in the briefing materials prepared by the Secretariat for the benefit of new members of the Council in future. In addition, Japan is preparing a handbook on the working methods of the Security Council which contains

official documents relating to the working methods of the Council, including the note by the President and the provisional rules of procedure, in handbook format. That publication itself is not an official document, and it will be produced and distributed to anyone interested under the sole responsibility of the Permanent Mission of Japan and as a temporary measure, pending such a handbook being found useful and the Council deciding to issue it, or something like it, as a Secretariat publication later on. That concludes my report on the work of the Working Group on documentation.”