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**SIXTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
74th SESSION**

Briefing by the Senior Political Affairs Officer, Officer-in-Charge of the Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch/Security Council Affairs Division/Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, on the
Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

1. I am most grateful for this opportunity to provide the delegates of the Sixth Committee with an update on the status of the *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council* and related activities. By way of introduction, I wish to refer you to the Report of the Secretary-General on the *Repertory* and the *Repertoire* (A/74/194) of 18 July 2019.
2. My remarks today will serve to provide you with an overview of the progress made by the Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch of the Security Council Affairs Division in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs since we last had the honour of briefing the Sixth Committee on 12 October 2018. I would also like to briefly reflect on our achievements in the context of the overall objective of the *Repertoire*.

3. **Distinguished delegates**, by its resolution 686 (VII) of 5 December 1952, the General Assembly mandated the Secretary-General to undertake the publication of the *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council* as one of the ways and means for making the evidence of customary international law more readily available. At the time, it was anticipated that within ten years of the establishment of the United Nations, Member States would hold a General Conference to review the Charter of the United Nations, pursuant to Article 109 of the Charter, and that the *Repertoire*, among other documents, would provide a useful basis in this regard.
4. Although the Charter review conference was never held, since its first volume was published in 1954, the *Repertoire* has provided an authoritative overview of the Security Council's contribution to the advancement of customary international law. The *Repertoire* provides comprehensive analytical summaries of the Council's interpretation and application of the Charter and its own Provisional Rules of Procedure. The material covered ranges from an overview of all agenda items before the Council; to coverage of procedural matters such as the format of meetings, voting, participation and the conduct of business; constitutional issues such as the Council's interpretation of the Purposes and Principles of the Charter, its functions and powers, its relations with other organs of the United Nations; as well as Council decisions and discussions in pursuit of the pacific settlement of disputes, enforcement action and the mandates of the diverse array of subsidiary bodies established by it.
5. I invite you to visit the website of the Security Council, where this rich history of the Council's proceedings has been duly chronicled in the

Repertoire for the benefit of Member States and the public at large, made searchable and systematized – both chronologically and by topic. The *Repertoire* constitutes a fundamental tool for Council and non-Council members alike, and for new delegates as well as for seasoned diplomats.

6. **Distinguished delegates**, today, as a result of our progress over the past several years, for the first time in its 67-year history, the *Repertoire* is being produced on a contemporary basis. With the recent publication of the 20th Supplement of the *Repertoire* covering the years 2016 and 2017, the main focus of our work over the past twelve months has been the simultaneous preparation of both the 21st and 22nd Supplements to the *Repertoire*, the first single-year editions of the publication, respectively covering the years 2018 and 2019. The advance version of the 21st Supplement (2018) will be posted online by the end of this month and we are on course to having the advance version of the 22nd Supplement (2019) completed at the same time next year by October 2020.

7. The aim of this ambitious schedule has been to ensure that the invaluable information on the practice of the Council is made available to the broader membership as soon as possible. In order to ensure the sustainability of this contemporary approach, additional financial support from Member States has been and remains absolutely critical. Indeed, the voluntary contributions of Member States have enabled us to use efficiency-enhancing initiatives and benefit from the availability of additional human resources. The Branch has also achieved progress by closely collaborating with other Secretariat departments, namely, the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM), the Department of Global Communications (DGC)

and the Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT). In addition, we have mobilized resources to develop a new database that will, once launched, greatly facilitate and automate our research and drafting of the *Repertoire*.

8. In terms of publishing, to date, all Supplements covering the period from 1989 to 2015 are available online in all six official languages. We are expecting to make all translated versions of the 20th Supplement, covering the years 2016 and 2017, available in early 2020. Thanks to our enhanced collaboration with DGACM, we are succeeding in shortening the time lag between the completion of Supplements and their eventual publication in all six official languages.
9. Besides the *Repertoire*, the newly revamped website of the Security Council, which was launched in December 2018, with the generous support of the Netherlands, offers a broad range of other information sources, including tables, graphs and statistical data providing different overviews and analyses of the practice of the Council. We continue to work on further enhancing the available content, search functionalities, visualization and structure of the website commensurate with its new layout.
10. The Branch has also continued to explore the use of modern technologies with a view to enhancing information tools, in particular to improve visualization and user interaction with the information available to them. In January 2019, owing to our excellent collaboration with OICT, the *Highlights of the Security Council Practice* was released earlier than ever before in early January 2019. As most of you know, the *Highlights* is an annual online

publication with statistical information on the evolving practice of the Security Council relating to meetings, missions, agenda, decisions and voting patterns, as well as on its subsidiary bodies. With the help of an external consultant and in collaboration with OICT and the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), we are developing a new layout utilizing a new technological platform and new data visualization for the upcoming 2019 edition of the publication.

11. Most recently, in August 2019, we launched a new interactive information platform, the Field Missions Dashboard, which is now available on the Security Council website. The Dashboard allows users to navigate the mandates of active United Nations peace operations. The Dashboard is a collaborative project between DPPA, DPO and the United Nations Volunteers and the result of over ten years of work in the Branch on tracking and systematizing Security Council mandates of field missions.
12. Subject to the availability of resources, we will continue to strive to make more information products available in the coming year. These products are geared to enhance the ability of Member States and the public at large to become more acquainted with the practice and work of the Security Council and the central role it exercises in the maintenance of international peace and security.
13. While the Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch continues to introduce new efficiency and quality measures, future progress on this front will be – as I mentioned – largely dependent on the provision of additional resources.

14. **Esteemed Chair, distinguished delegates**, the progress made in the preparation and publication of the *Repertoire* would not have been possible without the contributions received to the Trust Fund for the Updating of the *Repertoire* established by the General Assembly in resolution 54/106 of 9 December 1999. Thanks to the funds available in the Trust Fund, the Branch was able to utilize additional resources to those of the regular budget to advance the timely completion of the 20th Supplement (2016-2017), as well as the preparation of the 21st (2018) and 22nd Supplements (2019) on a one-year cycle.
15. We continue to be highly dependent on voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund in order to sustain the achievements of recent years. In this connection, we are truly thankful for the contributions made to the Trust Fund since our last briefing in 2018 by Argentina, China, Ireland, Poland, Singapore and Ukraine. We would also encourage Member States to consider the sponsorship of Associate Experts for the Branch. In this regard, we are particularly grateful to Italy and the Republic of Korea for their sponsorship of two Associate Experts over the past year.
16. These funds have allowed the *Repertoire* team to remove the gap between coverage of past and contemporary Council practice. At this stage, given the current budgetary constraints, unless the Trust Fund is replenished and resources are secured to reinforce the work of the Branch, the progress achieved so far may prove unsustainable. The continued and increasingly fast-paced flow of activity of the Security Council in the form of meetings and

outcomes presents an ever-growing challenge for the Branch in preparing the *Repertoire*.

17. **Esteemed Chairperson, distinguished delegates,** we welcome and look forward to your feedback on our work. I would like to underscore that, beyond this briefing, the Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch stands ready to support the wider membership with information and guidance on all procedural and constitutional aspects of the current as well as past practice of the Security Council.

Thank you.