

23 October 2020

**SIXTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
75<sup>th</sup> SESSION**

**Briefing by the Chief 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***

**Esteemed Chair, 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/75/145) of 24 July 2020.
2. My remarks today will focus on 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 17 October 2019. I would also like to briefly reflect on the overall objective of the *Repertoire* and plans for the way forward.

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. Since the first volume was published in 1954, the *Repertoire* has provided an authoritative overview of the Council's contribution to the advancement of international law through the interpretation and application of the Charter and its own Provisional Rules of Procedure.
4. The rich content of the publication offers a unique insight into the 75-year history of the Council, how the organ has given life to the Charter and how it has interpreted its powers and duties in the face of complex and evolving challenges to international peace and security. I invite delegates to visit the website of the Security Council, where these proceedings have 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.
5. **Distinguished delegates**, over the past year, the Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch continued to make significant progress in the preparation of the *Repertoire*. The Branch has successfully adapted its methodology to enable the contemporaneous coverage of the practice of the Council, a milestone in the 68-year history of the publication.

6. The focus of our work in the past twelve months was the simultaneous preparation of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Supplements of the *Repertoire*, respectively covering the years 2019 and 2020. The initial parts of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Supplement were made available in their advance form on the website of the Security Council in August 2020. The remaining parts are being added to the website as they become available, all of which are expected to be online by the end of this month.
  
7. In line with our methodology for covering contemporary practice, the Branch has also made significant progress in the research and drafting of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Supplement covering the year 2020. Following the decision of the Secretary-General in March 2020 to restrict the presence of Secretariat staff in the United Nations Headquarters in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Branch implemented business continuity plans and remote working arrangements in order to avoid any interruption to our research and drafting work. We have also adapted the methodology for the preparation of the *Repertoire* to the new virtual working methods of the Council, particularly as they relate to the holding of video teleconferences in lieu of in-person meetings and the written procedures for the adoption of resolutions. Steps taken in this regard aimed to maintain a comprehensive and accurate record of the practice of the Council during this unique period in its history. Moreover, given our flexibility in adapting our work to the new circumstances, we do not envisage any significant impact on the timelines for the preparation of the publication. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Supplement of the *Repertoire* remains on course to be made available on the website during the third quarter of 2021.

8. The objective of this ambitious schedule has been to ensure that the invaluable information on the practice of the Council is accessible to the broader membership as soon as possible. In order to ensure the sustainability of the contemporaneous coverage of the Council's practice, additional financial support from Member States has been and remains absolutely critical.
9. Indeed, the voluntary contributions of Member States have enabled us to use efficiency-enhancing initiatives and benefit from the availability of additional human resources. This has included strengthening our collaboration with other Secretariat departments in the preparation and publication of the *Repertoire*, 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).
10. In terms of publishing, to date, published versions of the Supplements covering the period from 1989 to 2017 are available online in all six official languages. Thanks to our efficient collaboration with DGACM, we have succeeded in shortening the time lag in the publication of Supplements in all official languages. Furthermore, I am pleased to report that the English version of the 21<sup>st</sup> Supplement covering the year 2018 was published in October 2020, with the editions in the remaining five languages expected in the second quarter of 2021. Going forward, we aim to consolidate a 22-month period from the closing of the relevant period to the publication of the hard copy of each Supplement.

11. Utilizing the wealth of information collected in the preparation of the *Repertoire*, the Branch has continued to use modern technology to develop a broad range of visual and interactive resource tools on the practice of the Council and to publish them on the website. In early January 2020, we launched a revamped edition of the *Highlights of Security Council Practice* covering the year 2019. As most of you know, the *Highlights* is an annual online publication which has been published since 2011, offering the most comprehensive snapshot of the activities of the Council related to its agenda, meetings, decisions, voting patterns, and the work of its subsidiary bodies. With the help of an external consultant and building on our close collaboration with OICT and DPO, the 2019 edition of the *Highlights* features a new design and technological platform, providing enhanced interactivity and visualization of data. The Branch also released a revamped version of the *Monthly Highlights of Security Council Practice* with a comparative multiyear overview of Council activity related to meetings, consultations, and outcomes dating back to 2012.

12. Several new resource tools were also introduced over the past year. In August 2020, we completed the development of three tools on the Council's practice with respect to the cross-cutting issues of Children and Armed Conflict, the Protection of Civilians, and Women and Peace and Security. The cross-cutting dashboards, as they are known, provide a comprehensive list of relevant provisions in Council decisions since 2008 and multiple interactive visualizations. In September 2020, the Branch further published a new resource on the composition of the Council since 1946, allowing users to visualize the data by year and by each elected member. As the next step, we

have also commenced work on enhancing the accessibility of the ever-increasing number of resource tools on the Council's website.

13. As in the past and subject to the availability of resources, we will continue to make more information products available to enable Member States and the public at large to become better acquainted with the work of the Council and the central role it exercises in the maintenance of international peace and security.
14. **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 ensure the timely completion of the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Supplements, covering the years 2018 and 2019, and to advance work on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Supplement covering the year 2020.
15. In this connection, we are truly thankful for the contributions made to the Trust Fund since our last briefing in 2019 by China and Ireland. We would also encourage Member States to consider the sponsorship of Associate Experts for the Branch. In this regard, we are particularly grateful to Denmark, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Sweden for their sponsorship of Associate Experts for the Branch.

16. These funds have allowed the *Repertoire* team to close the gap between coverage of past and contemporary Council practice. They have also enabled the Branch to provide both Council members and the wider membership with real time advisory and research support on procedural and substantive issues arising in the Council. Additional funding would allow us to further enhance the technology and tools needed to search through historical precedents to guide Council deliberations seamlessly and without delay.
  
17. Given the deepening financial constraints of the Organization, the sustainability of the progress achieved so far requires the continued replenishment of the Trust Fund and the securing of additional resources for the Branch. The increasingly dynamic and complex practice of the Security Council presents a growing challenge for the Branch in preparing the *Repertoire* and ensuring its timely publication. We count on the membership to continue supporting the *Repertoire* as an essential tool for understanding and contributing to the work of the Council.
  
18. **Esteemed Chairperson, distinguished delegates,** we welcome and look forward to your feedback on our work. I would like to underscore that, beyond updating you on the latest progress as part of this briefing, the Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch remains at the disposal of Member States to provide insight and guidance on all aspects of both the current and past practice of the Council.

Thank you.