

Statement by H.E. Mr. Ricardo Alberto Arias, Permanent Representative of Panama to the United Nations, as outgoing Chairman of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, at the 6043rd meeting of the Security Council on "Briefings by Chairmen of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council", New York – 15 December 2008

Thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to speak today in my capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. In my statement, I should like to give the Council an overview of the work undertaken by that subsidiary body under my chairmanship and to make a few personal remarks.

In 2008, the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions built on the work completed under previous Chairmen and continued to examine ways to best implement the notes by the President of the Security Council in documents S/2006/507 and S/2007/749. Among the priorities set by the Working Group in 2008 were issues related to the summary statements on matters of which the Security Council is seized, meeting formats, the participation of non-Council members in the work of the Security Council and the role of the Security Council President and the Chairs of subsidiary bodies. Owing to time constraints, we were unable to examine the last issue.

Early in the year, the Working Group worked towards improving the summary statements by making them more user-friendly. The Working Group subsumed similar and related items into a single agenda item. The Working Group is still considering a proposal to make the summary statement more accurate, reflecting the items of which the Council is actually seized and giving the Council greater involvement in its preparation. We expect agreement to be reached on that matter in the coming days. The Working Group also considered a proposal by the Chair on meeting formats and the participation of non-Council members, but was unable to reach a decision on that matter.

Further, the Working Group received a letter dated 5 September from the Chair of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, requesting us to examine their current procedures and to recommend measures to improve them, based on the practices of other Council subsidiary bodies. In deliberating that issue, we consulted the Secretariat and were briefed by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. Following those consultations, we drafted a response that is currently under no-objection procedure and should be delivered to the Chair in the following days. That communication includes a response from the Secretariat on the questions posed to them and highlights relevant passages of note of the President of the Security Council in document S/2006/507 that could assist them in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the methods of the Working Group.

As a follow-up to the open debate on the implementation on the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507), the delegation of Belgium submitted a proposal to update that note. However, some delegations suggested that we defer the consideration of that issue until 2009.

Finally, I would like to point out that, regardless of specific results, the fruitful exchanges held this year within the Working Group were crucial to clarifying and improving the implementation of current working methods, as well as to exploring new ways to make the Council more efficient in its deliberations.

Before closing, on a more personal note, I would like to extend my particular gratitude to all members of the Working Group for their time and effort. Their contributions to improving the working methods will definitely be translated into concrete results in the subsequent work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.