

Statement by H.E. Mr. Peter Burian, Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, as outgoing Chairman of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, at the 5806th meeting of the Security Council on “Briefings by Chairmen of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council”, New York – 17 December 2007

“[...]Let me now turn to Slovakia’s experience in chairing the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions over the past 12 months.

I took over the chairmanship of the Working Group from Ambassador Kenzo Oshima of Japan at an important period — after the Working Group was revitalized in 2006 and after, as part of the revitalization process, the Council decided that the Working Group should be chaired by a single Ambassador for an extended period instead of the previous ineffective system of rotating chairmanship to coincide with the monthly presidency of the Council. In January 2007 the Council decided to continue and standardize that new practice, which has proven very useful and effective, with my appointment as Chairman for the whole year.

Under the able Japanese chairmanship last year, the Working Group’s intensive efforts materialized in a substantive outcome — that is, a note by the President of the Security Council, in document S/2006/507. In this context, our priorities for the year 2007 have been promoting the full implementation of the note and tackling a range of other practical issues pertaining to documentation and procedures that have arisen from everyday work of the Council or that have been referred to the Working Group.

All members of the Security Council have been actively engaged in those efforts and have repeatedly committed themselves to implementing all agreed measures contained in the note.

I would like to use this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all members of the Security Council for their active and constructive approach. As a result, good progress has been achieved. However, I see this as work in progress, and I believe that further progress could and should be achieved in a number of areas. The Security Council and the Working Group need to continue exploring ways to facilitate even better implementation of all agreed measures in the area of documentation and procedures.

I would like to highlight five of the agreed measures contained in the note that the Working Group has been most engaged with in the earlier part of this year: first, written reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the Council; second, statements by Council members and oral briefings provided by members of the Secretariat; third, preparation of the so-called areas of focus for informal consultations; fourth, the planning of subsidiary bodies’ meetings; and fifth, Arria formula meetings.

As for practical documentation and procedural questions, the Working Group has tackled seven in particular: first, the participation of representatives of the Secretariat and members of individual Council delegations in formal closed consultations of the whole; second, the circulation of documents and information to Council members; third, the allocation of conference and translation services needed for everyday Council work; fourth, the formats of Security Council meetings; fifth, the Security Council annual report to the General Assembly; sixth, the Security Council's interaction and dialogue with other United Nations bodies, the Secretariat and other Member States; and seventh, matters of which the Council is seized and the so-called rolling agenda of the Council.

An important part of our work this year was close cooperation and interaction with the Secretariat, whose role is essential. That is why, in my capacity as Chairman of the Working Group, I met several times with the Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretaries-General for Political Affairs and for Peacekeeping Operations. Those meetings were extremely useful, and I believe they have contributed positively to the clarification of some open issues and to ensuring full implementation of all agreed measures in the area of documentation and procedures on the part of the Secretariat.

I would like to conclude by providing a few recommendations for the future work of the Working Group based on this year's experience. Slovakia believes that in the future, primary focus could be on the following four areas. First, efforts aimed at enhancing transparency and openness of the work of the Security Council, including the work of its subsidiary bodies should continue. Second, interaction and dialogue between the Security Council and other Member States, in particular those directly concerned and affected, should be enhanced and widened. Thirdly, Security Council private meetings with troop-contributing countries should be revitalized. Fourthly, efforts aimed at ensuring maximum relevance of the Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly should be continued [...].