Security Council

Letter dated 1 December 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of Japan, the Security Council plans to hold an open debate on Wednesday, 20 December 2017, on addressing complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security under the item "Maintenance of international peace and security".

In order to help guide the debate, Japan has prepared the attached concept note (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Koro **Bessho**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Japan
to the United Nations

Annex to the letter dated 1 December 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on the theme "Maintenance of international peace and security: addressing complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security", to be held on 20 December 2017

Introduction

The primary responsibility of the Security Council is the maintenance of international peace and security. Accordingly, the Council has long worked to address numerous conflicts by facilitating peace processes since its founding. In most cases, the root causes of conflicts are factors such as territorial disagreements, ethnic, religious or cultural disputes, or power struggles under weak governance.

At the same time, the modern world has witnessed the increasing influence of a number of complex driving factors that can destabilize countries, lowering the threshold for entering into conflict, or exacerbate or prolong existing conflicts. Those factors include, but are not limited to, climate change, famine, pandemic disease, transnational organized crime and drug trafficking, all of which pose distinct challenges to the international community as a whole. In most cases, those factors play a significant role in aggravating conflicts and compounding the suffering of the people in conflict-affected regions. In some cases, those factors themselves constitute a threat to security, such as in the case of climate change.

Furthermore, a country or region grappling with such conflict multipliers in the context of a conflict is at heightened risk of spreading its conflict to people and communities beyond its borders. The international community needs to better understand the linkages between conflicts and those aggravating factors, which are often ignored or insufficiently addressed, and to give higher priority to those problems in an integrated effort to prevent the occurrence, recurrence, prolongation or expansion of conflict.

Context

Thematic context

The Security Council has in recent years repeatedly discussed and expressed its views on the need to address the root causes and multipliers of conflict in a holistic and comprehensive manner. A number of meetings have been held as thematic debates.

In 2011, at the initiative of Brazil, an open debate on the interdependence between security and development was held (see S/2011/50). In the statement by the President of the Security Council adopted at the open debate (S/PRST/2011/4), the President of the Security Council underlined that "security and development are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing and key to attaining sustainable peace". The Council also reiterated that "in order to support a country to emerge sustainably from conflict, there is a need for a comprehensive and integrated approach that incorporates and strengthens coherence between political, security, development, human rights and rule of law activities, and addresses the underlying causes of each conflict".

In the same year, under the presidency of Portugal, the Security Council held an open debate on new challenges to international peace and security and conflict prevention (see S/2011/698). During the open debate, the Secretary-General stressed that "these are complex and multilayered threats that require multidisciplinary responses" and that "the United Nations is well placed to promote an integrated mix of political, development and capacity-building responses" (S/PV.6668).

In November 2015, under the presidency of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland the Security Council held an open debate on security, development and the root causes of conflict (see S/2015/845). At that meeting, the Secretary-General stressed that "we are not yet properly integrating United Nations action across the interdependent pillars of our work: peace, development and human rights" (S/PV.7561). The United Kingdom, emphasized that "the Security Council has a vital role in peacekeeping decisions and swift humanitarian actions — a vital role in ensuring that international humanitarian law is adhered to when conflict erupts and in helping to find political solutions" and that "increasingly our international institutions need to take on a greater role in addressing the underlying causes of fragility and conflict" (ibid.).

In May 2016, a briefing on the theme "Peace and security in Africa: challenges in the Sahel region" was held at the initiative of Egypt and Spain, with a focus on the impact of climate change on peace and security in that region (see S/PV.7699). In October 2016, at the initiative of Senegal, the Security Council held an open debate on water and peace and security, in which a number of countries stated that the problem of water scarcity or water insecurity was a threat multiplier that can aggravate existing tensions and conflicts and that not only was it a development issue but that it also had a bearing on peace and security (see S/2016/969).

Most recently, an open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace was held at the initiative of Sweden in January 2017, in order to identify challenges to more effective preventive action and to propose steps to overcome them (see S/2017/6). At that meeting, the Secretary-General stressed that "the interconnected nature of today's crises requires us to connect our own efforts for peace and security, sustainable development and human rights not just in words but in practice" (S/PV.7857).

Similarly, an open debate on United Nations peacekeeping operations and their potential contribution to the overarching goal of sustaining peace was held at the initiative of Egypt in August 2017 and it focused on exploring practical ways for the Security Council to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions and their role in conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as their contribution to an orderly transition to reconstruction and development in an inclusive manner, which are fundamental pillars for sustaining peace (see S/2017/692).

In November 2017, Italy, as the President of the Security Council, held a briefing on security challenges in the Mediterranean region, with the aim of discussing the root causes of the security challenges in the region through a comprehensive analysis (see S/PV.8106). At that meeting, the Secretary-General stressed that "the situation in the Mediterranean illustrates that peace and security are inseparable from democratic, economic and social progress and from the advancement of gender, youth, minority and human rights". Italy also held an open debate on the theme "Trafficking in persons in conflict situations", on which the Council adopted resolution 2388 (2017).

Regional context

The Security Council has also raised the alarm on situations exacerbated by the combination of complex challenges, when discussing specific countries and regions.

With regard to the Sahel region, the Security Council, in previous decisions, reaffirmed its continued commitment to addressing the challenges in the region, which are interrelated with humanitarian and development issues, as well as the adverse effects of climate and ecological change. Furthermore, the Council expressed its continued concern over the transnational dimension of the terrorist threat in the Sahel region, as well as the serious challenges posed by transnational organized crime, including the trafficking of arms, drugs and cultural property, the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, as well as its increasing links, in some cases, with terrorism, and underscored the responsibility of the countries in the region to address those threats and challenges (see resolution 2374 (2017) and S/PRST/2017/2).

With regard to the Lake Chad Basin, the Security Council recognized that security, development and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing and are vital to an effective and comprehensive approach to countering terrorism, stabilization and reconciliation. The Council also urged Governments in the region, donors and relevant international non-governmental organizations to ensure close coordination, including between development and humanitarian actors, recognizing the threat posed by terrorist groups linked with transnational organized crimes, threat of famine and adverse effects of climate change and ecological changes on the stability of the region, including through water scarcity, drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity (see resolution 2349 (2017) and S/PRST/2017/14).

The situation in Haiti shows a positive example of addressing conflict, while also addressing humanitarian and development needs. As a result of efforts across the board, the Security Council decided that the military component of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti would withdraw from Haiti and be mandated to assist the Government of Haiti to strengthen rule of law institutions, and that the efforts of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti to strengthen the rule of law in Haiti would be an integral part of a larger strategy towards a continued, progressive transition to development actors (see resolution 2350 (2017)).

Aim of the meeting

The Security Council has acknowledged the importance of taking a comprehensive and integrated approach to the increasingly complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security of today. Building upon the past discussions, Japan will hold an open debate to discuss how the Council can better address today's complex contemporary threats to international peace and security in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

In this context, the issue at hand is how the Security Council can address various driving factors of conflict, taking into account the entire peace continuum as well as the nexus between peace and security, development and humanitarian action.

Focus of the discussion

- Reflect on cases of success or failure on the part of the Security Council in addressing "conflict multipliers" in a comprehensive manner, and attempt to draw an ideal approach.

- Discuss how the Security Council can better address complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security, including through more active

interaction with different United Nations agencies and bodies, as well as non-members of the Council.

- Discuss how the Secretariat can assist the Council in increasing its awareness of those issues, including by providing regular updates.

- Discuss how the Security Council can align itself to the ongoing reform of the United Nations peace and security architecture that aims for cross-pillar links, coherence across the peace continuum from prevention to long-term development, as well as smoother transitions and better exit strategies.

- Discuss how protection and empowerment strategies, in other words, the human security approach, can present a possible direction to address these complex issues.

Date and format of the open debate

The meeting will be held in an open debate format on Wednesday, 20 December 2017.

Briefers

The briefer is the Secretary-General.

Outcome

A resolution is envisaged.

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