

Renewing our vision of a Security Council that has real impact on the ground

Mr President, I would like to thank Albania as Chair of the Informal Working Group for their excellent stewardship of this important topic. I also thank our briefers for their reflections on the Council's working methods.

President, as we emerge from Covid virtual working methods, it is welcome that we are back to full participation in open debates like this, to remain connected with the wider UN membership. And, I agree with my Russian colleague, my US colleague and others who say that we really value in-person meetings – although we managed well through the period of virtual working. Still, we have more to do to ensure the Council stays effective and efficient.

Our vision remains that the Council is able to solve problems through interactive debate, building consensus, responsible pen-holdership, and making decisions that have real impact on the ground. Sometimes, that means discussion in private not public, and we look forward to a full return to the consultations room.

On pen-holding, there is a longstanding convention of pen-holding to support consistency. But, as we have seen and heard, it is a flexible practice, as Ms Sievers said, and that we, the UK, have shared with Germany on UNITAMS, and we now share with Gabon on UNOCA.

It means being responsive to prevent conflict or deter escalation, and discussing issues even if uncomfortable for some. But all Council members have a responsibility to uphold the UN Charter. The GA resolution 76/262 on the veto, that we co-sponsored, is a welcome step in ensuring transparency and accountability when a member of the Council blocks action to maintain international peace and security – for example, as we saw on DPRK.

President, we also need to do more to ensure that we are using the Council's time efficiently. That means respecting the Council's mandate, not using it as a platform for propaganda and misinformation.

Sadly, Russia has done just that, consistently, since its illegal invasion of Ukraine. It still denies this is a war, even as its missiles continue to rain down on civilian targets.

With respect to the Russian Federation's allegations about our pen-holding on Libya, I made clear in the Council yesterday, our national position, shared by many others, that withdrawal of the Wagner Group mercenaries is an essential part of making progress in Libya. And on Yemen, I simply note that this is one file where we have made progress this year, since the start of the year, thanks to work of Members of this Council, countries of the region

and the UN – the hard won truce is holding.

President, if we are discussing procedure today, we should look at the founding rules of the UN.

Regrettably, the real challenge for the functioning of this Council is that a permanent member has torn up the UN Charter and invaded a sovereign neighbour. The global impacts are profound and affecting many of those issues on which the Council is seized.

I am sure we will hear from Member States today about their concerns about divisions in the Council. It will not be adjusted working methods that resolves this, but an end to Russia's illegal war.

Thank you.