

**KINGDOM OF BELGIUM**

Speech by H.E. Mr Philippe Kridelka,  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

UNSC Briefing - Subsidiary bodies

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**[Introduction]**

Mr President,

In recent months, I have had the honour of acting as Chairman of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, Chairman of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia, and Facilitator of the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) on Iran.

Belgium has had the privilege of serving these three bodies for two years, and I would like to thank the Council for giving me the opportunity to share my observations on this exercise as we prepare to welcome new incoming members and hand over the baton to them.

**[Fac 2231]**

It has been an honour to act as Facilitator of resolution 2231. In carrying out this task, I have been able to rely firstly on the excellent work done by the Netherlands, which was succeeded as Facilitator by Belgium, and secondly, on the unfailing support of the Secretariat.

During this mandate, my intention was to support and improve the implementation of the resolution on behalf of the Security Council, following the three guidelines inherited from my Dutch predecessor: (1) facilitation of dialogue between the parties, (2) transparency in our work, and (3) encouragement of trade within the supply chain.

We are all aware of the current difficult context of the Comprehensive Plan of Action and resolution 2231: the United States' withdrawal, Iran's successive disengagements and the United States' position on the former resolutions of the 1737 (Iran) Committee. In these circumstances, Belgium has done its best to play its role as an "honest broker" between the different parties. I am convinced that maintaining the integrity of the format has paved the way for diplomatic space.

As I leave this position, I am more convinced than ever that we need collective responses from the Council to the issues of international peace and security, and the Action Plan is one such key response. It is one of the great successes of nuclear non-proliferation, dialogue and diplomacy. It is a centrepiece of multilateralism, peace and international security. I can therefore only encourage all Member States and regional and international organisations to take appropriate action to support and strengthen its implementation.

## **[CAAC]**

Belgium also chaired the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. I have built on the work of my predecessor, Sweden, to pursue a proactive and ambitious work plan.

The continued erosion of international humanitarian law is deeply worrying, and children are its first victims. This is unacceptable and we share the responsibility to address it as a matter of urgency. The unity of the Security Council and its strong support for the CAAC mandate have been a constant encouragement to me. Over the past two years, we have adopted conclusions on almost all country situations, including those where the Council itself remains divided, such as Myanmar and Syria. With two Presidential Statements (PRST) (one in February 2020 with the presence of the King and Queen of the Belgians and the other in September 2020 with the Nigerian Presidency of the Council), we have strengthened the focus on attacks on schools and the protection of children in mediation processes.

We must continue to improve the impact of the Working Group: closer follow-up to the conclusions remains necessary, both in New York and in the countries concerned (for example, at the initiative of our bilateral embassies). Similarly, in my view the Working Group's direct engagement with the country task forces and authorities of the countries concerned should be maintained and strengthened. The same applies to regular country visits, such as the one we organised to Mali in December 2019, and to raising the awareness of civil society. We must also preserve the integrity and impartiality of the listing mechanism.

The CAAC mandate cannot be limited to the Working Group alone, and the Council must continue to mainstream child protection throughout its work by ensuring dedicated capacity in UN missions and emphasising child protection in meetings and country visits.

I would like to thank all the Council members for their commitment to the CAAC mandate. I would like to express my particular gratitude to the Office of the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict, led with passion and intelligence by Ms Virginia Gamba, as well as to UNICEF and DPO/DPPA for their valuable and intense collaboration. Together, they represent what I would call the UN and the Security Council at their best.

Later, through the President of the Council, I will distribute a more detailed overview of lessons learned and recommendations.

## **[751 Somalia]**

Lastly, over the past two years, we have seen the evolution of sanctions on Somalia. For example, the partial lifting of the arms embargo in favour of the Somali authorities has been extended. The terms of the embargo have been clarified and consolidated into a single resolution. In addition, following the recommendations of the Group of Experts, the Council also decided to embargo certain products used in the manufacture of explosives, for which an implementation assistance note has been drawn up and is available to all Member States on the Committee's website.

The Committee met informally on ten occasions under the Belgian Presidency, including meetings by videoconference, and dealt with more than fifty notifications. The Committee held discussions with the Somali authorities on two occasions, not to mention the working visit to Mogadishu organised by the Presidency in January 2020.

It should be noted that the Committee has paid greater attention to the financing capacity of Al-Shabaab, as well as to ways of reducing it, thanks to the excellent investigative and analytical work of the Group of Experts.

The relationship between the Group of Experts and the Somali Federal Government has been a focus of attention throughout our mandate. We have all contributed to strengthening this mutually beneficial working relationship. I express the hope that this cooperation will continue and grow further. Because it sometimes touches on sensitive issues, I would like to commend here the commitment shown by the Somali Federal Government in entering into dialogue with the Committee and the Group of Experts on these matters.

I would like to make one last point. The term "sanctions regime" is unfortunate. It should be recalled that the Council is not sanctioning Somalia, rather sanctioning those who pose a threat to peace and security in Somalia - and that is a fundamental difference. Furthermore, the sanctions regime is also evolving to adapt to current threats. In conclusion, it is a tool to support peace and security in Somalia: it can only improve with the cooperation of all parties with a view to achieving its objectives more quickly.

## **[Three general remarks]**

Lastly, allow me to make two more general remarks and one more specific one.

Firstly, throughout its mandate Belgium has attached particular importance to **due process** in the implementation of the various Security Council sanctions regimes. In that regard, we hope that Council members can commit to continuing to make United Nations sanctions more effective by considering ways of having fairer and more transparent procedures.

Secondly, it is important to stress the heavy workload involved in chairing a subsidiary body, especially for missions with smaller teams. Belgium thus advocates a **fairer distribution of the Chairmanships of subsidiary bodies** between elected and permanent members of the Council.

Thirdly, and more specifically, on an interim basis Belgium has chaired another subsidiary body, the United Nations Compensation Committee (UNCC), which is looking into the reparations owed by Iraq to Kuwait since the war between these two States. This is a subsidiary body of the Council, which is unfortunately often somewhat neglected, because it is based in Geneva and is a complaints committee of an actuarial nature. However, I would like to mention this today because it is likely that the next Chair will oversee the final payment of these reparations and, therefore, the termination of the UNCC, which will probably involve an *ad hoc* UNSC resolution.

### **[Thanks from the Secretariat and welcoming of successors]**

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude for the dedication and professionalism of my colleagues in the Secretariat, whose support has been crucial.

I wish my successors every success. We will ensure the smooth transition of our mandates through close cooperation and will remain available to them during this phase and beyond.

In this respect, let me finally draw your attention to the Handbook of Best Practice for Chairs and Members of Sanctions Committees, prepared by Belgium and other Member States. We hope that this Handbook will be a useful tool in the preparations of future Chairs and their teams.

Thank you, Mr President.