



*The Permanent Mission of Portugal
to the United Nations*

Debate on the Annual Report of the Security Council (A/77/2) under agenda item 27

30 June 2023

ACCOUNTABILITY, COHERENCE & TRANSPARENCY (ACT)

**Statement by H.E. the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations
in New York, Ambassador Ana Paula Zacarias, on behalf of the ACT Group**

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President,

I am pleased to take the floor on behalf of the twenty-seven members¹ of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) Group.

We welcome the timely adoption of the Annual Report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, under the Swiss presidency of the Security Council on 30 May 2023 to whom we thank for facilitating its smooth adoption. We thank you also, President, for convening today's meeting and the United Arab Emirates, as President of the Council for the month of June, for the presentation of the Report.

The ACT Group aims to promote a more transparent, effective, and efficient United Nations. In this regard, we advocate for the improvement of the Council's working methods, as well as other ways to promote the meaningful interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly. To be better prepared, we should continue taking concrete steps in accordance with the letter² sent by the outgoing members of the Council on lessons learned on the working methods of the Council during the pandemic, as recognized in the Report.

President,

The ACT Group would like to address once again the process and the substance of the Annual Report of the Security Council.

¹Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Jordan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Maldives, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and Uruguay.

² Letter of 29 December 2022 (S/2022/1011).



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First, the ACT Group welcomes the adoption of the Report by the Security Council³ on the deadline of 30 May 2023, and commends Brazil for its dedication in steering this process and coordinating the report's Introduction.

The ACT Group considers there is scope to improve the process of preparation of the Report.

An open debate could be organized in preparation of the Annual Report in January, in line with Note 507⁴, to assess the work of the Council ahead of the drafting of the Introduction of the Report.

We also note that while the Report was adopted on time, it was not possible to meet other important milestones set by the Council such as reaching agreement on its Introduction by the end of January in the interest of facilitating an earlier consideration of the Report by the General Assembly. We call to set a fixed timeline for the General Assembly discussion on the Annual Report as an internal deadline has been set for the Council itself in Note 507. We believe this would enhance transparency and predictability and encourage the Council to continue to improve its efforts in this regard.

Second, the Report provides a valuable and factual overview of the work of the Security Council during 2022, which returned to its usual conduct of business in terms of working methods, after the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We welcome the inclusion of statistics in the introduction notably the comparison of the number of unscheduled meetings held at the request of Council members, which increased from 34 in 2021 to 85 in 2022, which reflects dynamics of the Council. We also appreciate the inclusion of disaggregated data on the participation of women. We commend for example that women briefers increased in 2022 with a 46 % of women briefing the Council in contrast with 44% in 2021 and only 34 % in 2020.

We also welcome the inclusion in the introduction of the report of relevant information on the number of occasions where a veto was cast. We believe it is important to include information in the Report on instances where the Council has been unable to act despite an obvious need and a mandate.

We acknowledge the reference to the submission of three special reports in accordance with resolution 76/262, and the information included on the adoption of a resolution in line with the Uniting for Peace Resolution⁵.

The ACT Group also commends those paragraphs of the Report that address substantive issues or trends, notably the references to the discussions on a range of emerging issues including the nexus between conflict and food insecurity, technology and security, or relevant information as was the establishment of a sanctions' regime for Haiti.

³337 A (V). As set out in its Note by the President S/2019/997.

⁴Presidential Note S/507/2017, paragraph 129.

⁵377 A (V).



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At the same time, we note in the body of the Report the factual account of the work of the Security Council, and we encourage the Council again to provide a more complete, substantive and analytical account of its work to the General Assembly, including further details on the draft resolutions that failed to be adopted by the Council, such as a brief description of the resolutions' purposes and main provisions, and an indication of the grounds for rejection.

The body of the Council's Annual Report should include a chapter on the veto with the cases in which it has been exercised, statements of explanation by the Member States which exercised the veto, and statistics on the number of times it has been exercised in the past. Indeed, we note that the word "veto" is used for the first time, in the Report's Introduction, which represents an element of welcomed clarity, and we commend all Members of the Council, notably its elected members, for this decision.

Furthermore, while we commend the references and links to the special reports in the body of the Annual Report, we consider that in light of Article 24 paragraph 3 of the UN Charter, a standalone chapter should also be included on the Special Reports, whether they result from the implementation of Resolution 76/262 or not. This could also be achieved by bringing the process of adoption by the Council of Special Reports in line with the same procedure as that of the Annual Report itself.

Besides, information could also be included on the implementation of Security Council's Resolutions and Decisions, with an indication of the constraints and reasons behind any lack of implementation.

The ACT Group also wishes to encourage the timely compilation and use of the monthly Assessments by Council presidencies, which constitute important reference documents reflecting the views of members on the work of the Council. As such assessments don't represent the views of the Council as a whole, but rather the view of the Presidency of the month, so its substance should not be reduced to the lowest common denominator.

We would also like to commend the efforts to increase the transparency by holding wrap-in and wrap-up sessions, and we recall ACT's non-paper circulated in June 2021 with a view to improve interactive exchanges.

As a complementary document, it is also worth mentioning the important work of the Security Council Affairs Division in preparing the Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council, as the only official and comprehensive coverage of the Security Council's interpretation and application of the Charter and Provisional Rules of Procedure since 1946. We encourage all Member States to provide voluntary contributions to ensure the preservation of institutional memory through this important tool.



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Third, we suggest the Annual Report should highlight relevant information regarding the Council's closed consultations, and discussions held under "any other business" (AOB) to promote further transparency and help the wider membership understand the full range of issues and situations the Council is engaged with.

The ACT Group also encourages the President of the General Assembly to assess today's debate and resume the practice of preparing and transmitting a summary of the recommendations expressed by delegations to Member States and to the President of the Security Council for the subsequent consideration of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, noting that Note 507, encourages the Council President to report back on the suggestions and observations of the General membership.

Finally, the ACT Group looks forward to engaging with the United Kingdom – which will lead the drafting process of the 2023 Annual Report – and all Council members throughout this process.

I thank you.