



Security Council

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Letter dated 14 October 2021 from the Permanent Representatives of New Zealand and Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

We are writing on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group comprising 27 Member States¹ from all regional groups. The Group advocates Security Council working methods that meet higher standards of efficiency, as well as accountability towards and inclusion of the wider United Nations membership. The Group further promotes a more transparent, effective and efficient United Nations.

In recognition of the unprecedented nature of the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the efforts of successive Security Council presidencies since March 2020 to ensure business continuity, the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group has encouraged the Council to continue improving and, where necessary, revisit its working methods to ensure transparency and inclusion. In this regard, the Group outlined a number of recommendations in a letter dated 8 February 2021 ([S/2021/121](#)).

With the present letter, we wish to follow up on these recommendations. We note in particular the urgency of enabling direct participation by non-Council members in open debates held in person. Open debates are intended to promote interaction between the Council and the wider United Nations membership and to inform the Council's deliberations. We are concerned about the prolonged lack of direct engagement between the Council and the wider United Nations membership. Written contributions cannot substitute for this interaction, which is key for greater accountability and transparency of the Security Council.

Written contributions served their purpose as a temporary mitigation measure against the backdrop of the exceptional and unprecedented circumstances brought about by the pandemic. With the return to in-person meetings at the United Nations Headquarters, we call on the Security Council to restore direct in-person participation in open debates by the wider United Nations membership, including Member States and observer States.

Encouraged by the successful conduct of in-person meetings during the high-level segment of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly in September, we trust that arrangements can be found, with the support of the Secretariat to enable this, in compliance with public health guidelines and while maintaining the

¹ Members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group: Austria, 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.



appropriate safety standards. In this regard, we acknowledge Kenya's consideration to enable in-person participation by non-Council members during its presidency. We welcome this first step towards finding ways to open up the work of the Council to participation by the wider United Nations membership. The Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group stands ready to continue engaging with Council members, including through the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and with the wider United Nations membership to explore creative ways to strengthen the effectiveness of open debates while ensuring inclusivity.

(Signed) Craig J. **Hawke**
Permanent Representative

(Signed) Pascale **Baeriswyl**
Permanent Representative
