

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 2 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council
addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the
Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit herewith a paper on the working methods of the Security Council for the month of April 2020, during the presidency of the Dominican Republic (see annex). The paper has been agreed upon by the members of the Council in the light of the continued challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic to the Council's usual procedures.

(Signed) José **Singer Weisinger**
President of the Security Council



Annex

Working methods of the Security Council during the presidency of the Dominican Republic, April 2020

1. The Dominican Republic will assume the presidency of the Security Council on 1 April 2020 in unprecedented circumstances.
2. The State of New York has requested all non-essential personnel to remain in their homes in order to limit physical exposure and therefore stop the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Social distancing has been proved to be the most effective way to control the spread of the virus, thus saving the lives of those most vulnerable to its effects.
3. The Secretary-General has issued a series of measures aimed at limiting the presence of United Nations staff within the United Nations premises until 12 April 2020.
4. Given the seriousness of the circumstances, under the leadership of the President of the Council for the month of March (China), the Council held numerous consultations on the issue of the continuity of its work.
5. The meetings were held virtually, with the participation of all Council members and representatives of the Secretary-General and the Security Council Affairs Division.
6. After consultations with the Secretariat and all Council members, the Dominican Republic plans to utilize the following guidelines for the month of April, which are aimed at continuing the work of the Council to the greatest extent possible. The guidelines are provided in addition to the measures outlined in the letter dated 27 March 2020 from the President of the Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Council ([S/2020/253](#)), which are in effect until the end of April.
7. The guidelines are only a response to the current exceptional and unprecedented circumstances. They must and will be revised, should circumstances change during the course of the presidency of the Dominican Republic, in close consultation with all Council members and in the light of updates to and developments in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Informal video teleconference plan of the Council

8. In the spirit of transparency, during the month of April 2020, the Dominican Republic intends to conduct Council video teleconferences on the items reflected in the informal plan issued by the presidency after consultations with Council members during the first working day of its presidency. The informal plan will include the open and closed video teleconferences that usually appear as briefings and consultations in the Council's programme of work.
9. For purposes of transparency and inclusiveness, and in line with the working methods of the Council, the informal plan will be circulated by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations to the wider membership of the Organization and published on the Council's website on an exceptional basis, as well as on the website of the Permanent Mission.

Discussions

10. It is intended that the following nomenclature be utilized for the virtual discussions held during the presidency of the Dominican Republic: "open video teleconference on [item on the agenda to be discussed]", followed by "closed video teleconference on [item on the agenda to be discussed]".

11. Consultations will be referred to as “closed video teleconference on [item on the agenda to be discussed]”.
12. With the assistance of the Security Council Affairs Division, the presidency of the Dominican Republic plans to work in the spirit of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure, ensuring that all Council members participating in a virtual discussion are represented by appropriately credentialed delegates, pursuant to rule 13; that the agenda is adopted at the outset of the video teleconference, pursuant to rule 9; and that any other relevant rules are observed as a matter of practice, under chapter VI, entitled “Conduct of business”.
13. The President of the Council may invite Member States, members of the Secretariat or individuals who are not members of the Council to participate in a video teleconference within the principles of rules 37 and 39 if there are no objections from Council members. Such an invitation will not apply to a closed video teleconference.
14. Given technical constraints, the virtual discussions will be conducted in English.

Video teleconference announcement

15. The day before an event, the presidency of the Council will share with the wider membership of the United Nations, through email, a message from the President of the Council, in which the video teleconference will be announced.
16. The message will also be available to the wider membership and the general public in the programme of work on the website of the Council.
17. Unless the situation changes, there will be no announcement of the meetings in the *Journal of the United Nations*.

Records of video teleconferences

18. Unless the situation changes, verbatim records of the events will not be published.
19. Given that there has been no agreement to consider the discussions of the Council held on the virtual platform as formal meetings, and to ensure the transparency and legitimacy of the Council, the Dominican Republic will encourage briefers, where appropriate and according to their own practice, to share their presentations with the President of the Council. Special representatives of the Secretary-General, special envoys of the Secretary-General and department heads may also wish to publish their statement to the Council on the web page of their mission or department on the United Nations website.
20. The President of the Council will circulate as a document of the Council a compilation document within 48 hours containing the interventions of the briefers and those of the members and non-members of the Council participating in the video teleconference who ask for the inclusion of their statement in the document. To that end, members are encouraged to send their statement to the presidency in a timely manner. Circulation of a compilation document will not apply to the closed video teleconferences of Council members.

Live feed of briefers through United Nations webcasts

21. When substituting a regular briefing of the Council, the Dominican Republic considers that the open video teleconference will be divided into two parts. As in regular practice in open briefings in the Security Council Chamber, the first part will be a public live feed of the relevant briefers, moderated by the President of the Council, streamed by United Nations webcast. The feed will allow the international community, including the wider United Nations membership, to be informed of the

latest developments pertaining to issues on the Council's agenda. The President will be connected to the same feed in order to moderate the presentations and, upon their conclusion, invite the Council to hold an open or a closed video teleconference, which will not be webcast. In consultation with members, open video teleconferences will be fully webcast as soon as is technically feasible.

Recordings of the public portion of open Council video teleconferences

22. In coordination with the Secretariat, the President plans to request that the webcasts of the statements delivered by briefers during the public portion of the Council's video teleconferences be archived as United Nations webcasts.

Outcomes of open video teleconferences followed by closed video teleconferences

23. To the extent possible, and in agreement with Council members, the Dominican Republic will facilitate the negotiation of press statements or elements for the press after every Council discussion. The President will thereafter orally deliver any agreed elements for the press through United Nations webcast.

Adoption of decisions

24. As President of the Council, the Dominican Republic will be bound by the agreement reached by Council members under the leadership of China as President of the Council for the month of March 2020 and outlined in the letter dated 27 March 2020 from the President addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Council, which establishes a written procedure for the adoption of resolutions, if necessary. These temporary, extraordinary and provisional measures will enable the Council to discharge its mandate and will not be considered as a precedent in the future.

Presidential statements

25. In the absence of objections, presidential statements that have been electronically agreed upon by consensus following a non-objection procedure of no less than 48 hours will be read out by the President during an open video teleconference. The statements will have the same status as those adopted in the Security Council Chamber. They will also be published as an official document of the Council.

26. The procedure for the adoption of presidential statements is a temporary, extraordinary and provisional measure to enable the Council to discharge its mandate and will not be considered as a precedent in the future.

Conduct of video teleconferences by the members of the Council

27. In order to make the discussions as efficient as possible, the Dominican Republic requests all participants to see to it that both principal and alternate delegates are logged in at the same time, thereby ensuring that, if a principal's connection is dropped, an alternate can take his or her place immediately. The procedure will minimize the need to suspend the event if participants lose their connection.

28. It is highly recommended that all principals, alternates and briefers test their microphones and video equipment 30 minutes before the beginning of a video teleconference, including by connecting through the links provided, and follow the technical guidance provided by United Nations technicians.

29. Following general practice, the order of speakers for the video teleconferences of Council members will be established by a draw.

30. To allow for more interactive and focused interventions by Council members, briefers are asked by the presidency to share their statements in advance and through the presidency.
 31. Briefers will be encouraged to be succinct and to limit their remarks to seven minutes.
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