



Security Council

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Letter dated 25 March 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of April 2021, Viet Nam intends to organize an open debate on the theme “Enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in enhancing confidence-building and dialogue in conflict prevention and resolution”, under the agenda item entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security”, on Monday, 19 April 2021 at 8 a.m. (New York time).

In order to guide the discussions on the topic, Viet Nam has prepared and transmits herewith a concept note (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Dang Dinh Quy**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Viet Nam
to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 25 March 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council high-level open debate on the theme “Enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in enhancing confidence-building and dialogue in conflict prevention and resolution” to be held on 19 April 2021

Background

1. The international community’s efforts towards the maintenance of international peace and security continue to be seriously challenged. The “scourge of war” still plagues our world today as many regions and countries still experience tensions and instability, often caused by ethnic and racial conflicts, inter-State disputes, transnational organized crime, activities of armed and terrorist groups, among others. Even five years ago, the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations plainly put it that the international community is failing at conflict prevention (see [S/2015/446-A/70/95](#)). Since 2015, the total number of fatalities resulting from conflicts has reached more than 488,000.¹ And we are suffering, especially given that a relatively modest investment before violence erupts could avert the necessity for the much more extensive resources required once prevention has failed. The global humanitarian appeal launched by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stood at \$19.44 billion in 2015, and six years later, that number is a staggering \$31.6 billion.²

2. Furthermore, the impact of the current coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on peace and security is of growing concern. It has not only killed millions, but has also been adding an extra layer of difficulty to our efforts of maintaining peace and stability in various corners of the world.

3. The protraction and the risk of resurgence of conflicts in many areas are putting on display the fact that our current prevention efforts are being seriously hindered. A great number of preventive measures unfortunately have not been able to show their full potential owing to the absence of political will on various occasions. In pursuing such measures as conducting fact-finding missions or issuing early warnings, it is not always the case that the parties concerned show their full readiness.

4. The promotion of confidence-building measures and dialogue have proven themselves to be able to prevent and resolve crises that might have escalated into further violence as well as to reduce tensions between States or among parties in intra-State conflict. When a dialogue mechanism is in place early on, favourable conditions will be created to enhance mutual understanding, especially of the legitimate interests of the parties concerned, to avoid miscalculation and to nurture chances for engagement, which in turn advance the prospect for a diplomatic resolution of disputes.

5. With comparative advantages of geographical proximity, experience and in-depth knowledge of local dynamics, regional and subregional organizations are attuned to the current trends and contexts of their regions and are better prepared for

¹ Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2021.

² See report of the Secretary-General entitled “United Nations and conflict prevention: a collective recommitment” ([S/2015/730](#)); see also *Global Humanitarian Overview 2021* (Geneva, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, December 2020).

detecting and mitigating the signs and causes of worsening situations. Therefore, they have the felicitous capability to nurture a habit of dialogue and cooperation among member States, while continuing to shape, share and uphold international norms for governing inter-State relations, and to support regional countries in intra-State conflict prevention and resolution.

6. Recognizing these advantages, the United Nations bodies, especially the Security Council, have held discussions with various regional organizations, including the African Union, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the League of Arab States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). These regional organizations have established various mechanisms to promote confidence-building measures in order to establish trust and avoid tensions among regional countries as well as to assist individual member States in this regard. The African Union has been playing the central role in order to ensure the achievement of “a peaceful and secure Africa” as one of the aspirations of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. Apart from coordinating efforts to settle inter-State disputes, the African Union and other subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Southern African Development Community, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, to name a few, have been of great help in facilitating intra-State confidence-building and dialogue, for example in the cases of the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, South Sudan, Sudan and others. Many countries in Europe have also enjoyed the support of OSCE in promoting confidence-building measures and dialogue. The publication of the *OSCE Guide on Non-military Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)*, which demonstrates the readiness of OSCE to exert every effort to settle and prevent disputes in that way, is also a case in point.

7. Since its establishment, ASEAN has gone to great lengths to promote trust and confidence among its member States as well as with other external partners in various fields of cooperation, including security and defence. Confidence-building measures are the underpinnings of ASEAN, as well as of the ASEAN Regional Forum and other ASEAN-led mechanisms. The “ASEAN way”, with a honed focus on patiently building and sustaining dialogue and consensus while ensuring respect for equality and the legitimate concerns of the relevant parties, has been credited with helping bring about peace, stability and development in Southeast Asia.

8. Over the years, the Security Council has elaborated on a number of specific aspects of cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, including in conflict prevention and resolution. However, it is regrettable that the unique importance of promoting confidence-building measures and dialogue, in cooperation with regional organizations, in conflict prevention and resolution has been overlooked to a certain extent.

9. A great number of confidence-building measures are in place, but their implementation does not live up to the expectations. These measures require adjustment as the motives for them become different over time. In a conflict cycle or during a post-conflict period, for instance, different contextual approaches and means are essential to achieve tangible results.

10. An open debate on this very topic would therefore fill the gap and contribute meaningfully to the overall effort of the Council in discharging its primary responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Objectives of the open debate

11. The open debate would aim for the following:

(a) To underline the importance of continuously strengthening cooperation between the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, and regional and subregional organizations, in conflict prevention and resolution;

(b) To highlight the need for further enhancing and constantly renewing confidence-building measures and dialogue in order to contribute to conflict prevention and resolution efforts;

(c) To share experiences and illuminate recent best practices on collaboration between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations as well as among various regional organizations in this regard;

(d) To renew shared commitments and further explore measures to promote the role of regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention and resolution, in conjunction with the work of the Security Council and other United Nations bodies.

Indicative points for discussion

12. With such objectives, member States and speakers are invited to address the following:

(a) New challenges to promoting and supporting the partnership between the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, and regional and subregional organizations, in conflict prevention and resolution efforts;

(b) The importance of enhancing confidence-building measures and dialogue to support conflict prevention and resolution efforts;

(c) Experiences and lessons learned regarding cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in promoting confidence-building measures and dialogue among the parties concerned in order to resolve disputes;

(d) Recommendations to enhance the complementary partnership between the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention and resolution through building confidence and promoting dialogue;

(e) Measures to form and enhance cooperation among regional organizations in this matter.

Format, briefers and expected outcome

13. The high-level open debate will be held virtually at 8 a.m. (New York time) on 19 April 2021. The Head of State of Viet Nam (to be confirmed) will chair the meeting.

14. Member States and observers are invited to submit a written statement to the Security Council Affairs Division (dppa-scsb3@un.org). Statements submitted no later than the day of the meeting will be included in a compilation document.

15. The briefers are expected to include the Secretary-General, representatives of several regional organizations and one or more eminent experts.

16. A statement by the President of the Security Council on this matter is expected.