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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND ON THE STRENGTHENING OF THE ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 71st SESSION

Briefing by the Chief of the Security Council Affairs Division, Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch, Department of Political Affairs on the Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council

23 February 2017

Esteemed Chair, distinguished delegates,

1. I am grateful for this opportunity to update the members of the Charter Committee on the status of the *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council* and related activities. By way of introduction, I wish to make reference to the report of the Secretary-General on the *Repertory* and the *Repertoire* (A/71/202) of 25 July 2016. My comments today will summarize the progress achieved so far and provide some key updates.
2. Since our last briefing to the Special Committee on 19 February 2016, the Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch of the Security Council Affairs Division has continued to make good progress in the updating of the *Repertoire*.
3. In May 2016, the Branch completed the drafting of the 18th Supplement covering the period from 2012 to 2013, which is now in the process of being published by [our colleagues in] the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM). The advance English version of the Supplement is available on the *Repertoire* section of the Security Council website.

4. Conscious of the need of making available – as expeditiously as possible – the information concerning the work and practice of the Security Council, we continue to work with the DGACM to shorten the time lag between the completion of a Supplement and its eventual publication in all six official languages.

5. The Branch has also made significant progress in the drafting of the 19th Supplement, covering the period from 2014 to 2015. Parts I and X of this Supplement have been drafted and are available in their advance versions online on the *Repertoire* website. Part I provides a general overview of the proceedings of the Security Council in respect of the agenda items that relate to its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and Part X covers the decisions of the Council relating to its field-based subsidiary organs, namely, peacekeeping operations and special political missions. [The drafting of Part V, which covers the functions and powers of the Security Council, as provided for in Articles 24, 25 and 26 of the Charter, has also been completed and is now available online in its advance form.] The Branch is working on the remaining parts of the 19th Supplement which we expect to be made available online in the second half of 2017.

6. Progress in the preparation of the *Repertoire* has been and continues to be mostly based on efficiency-enhancing initiatives, such as the specialized training of staff, the review of editorial and other processes, the progressive automation of data collection, the increased use of internal databases and the continuous updating and improvement of the *Repertoire* drafting guidelines. In addition, progress has been achieved

by closely collaborating with other UN departments, namely, DGACM, the Department of Public Information (DPI) and the Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT).

7. In October 2016, the Branch concluded a lessons learned study on the *Repertoire* and its website with a view to identifying additional measures to improve the publication as well as the tables and graphs made available on the website of the *Repertoire*. Some of the preliminary findings of the study appear to confirm that future progress will very much depend on the availability of resources, which I will address later.
8. A few words about the publishing status of those Supplements of the *Repertoire* that cover the period from 1993 to 2013 that have been posted on the *Repertoire* website.
9. In cooperation with the DPI, we have posted the translated Supplements of the *Repertoire* online. The 12th, 13th and 14th Supplements covering the period from 1993 to 2003 are now available online in all six languages, [with the exception of the Spanish translation of the 13th Supplement covering 1996-1999 which will be made available soon]. The 15th and 16th Supplements' translated versions covering the period 2004 to 2011 will also be made available on the *Repertoire* website [early in the second half of this year].
10. In addition, I am glad to report that the 17th Supplement in English (covering the years 2010 and 2011) was made available in print (hard copy) in October 2016 and is now scheduled to be translated by the end of 2017. The 18th Supplement (covering from 2012 to 2013) is expected to be

published in all six official languages [also by the end of 2017].

11. In addition to the Supplements of the *Repertoire*, I invite you to explore the *Repertoire* website which is available in all official languages. Since our last reporting, the search engine has been further updated and now includes advanced search features including phonetic, synonym and proximity searching as well as an enhanced pdf view. I urge you to make use of it, it is very effective. The search engine's overall revamping aimed at making searches of the *Repertoire* more accessible to a broader public. As a result, it is now more user-friendly, reliable and accurate and it enables users to understand better the structure of the *Repertoire* and search its content faster and more efficiently than in the past.

12. The website also offers a broad range of other tools and information such as tables, graphs and other data featuring, among other things, statistical data on the practice of the Council, the mandates of peacekeeping operations and special political missions, as well as relevant provisions of decisions of the Council in relation to cross-cutting agenda items, namely, children and armed conflict, women and peace and security, and the protection of civilians.

13. In the past years, we have worked hard to enhance the information available on these tools as well their interactive nature. A case on point is the Highlights of the Security Council Practice. For the past two years (covering 2015 and 2016), in collaboration with OICT, we have used a new platform for the publication of the Council's data. In addition, in October 2016, we also made available a variety of graphs featuring information on decisions and measures related to the existing sanctions regimes and other

restrictions authorized pursuant to Article 41 of the Charter. Subject to the availability of resources, we will continue to strive to make more tools available in the coming year. These tools, we believe, enhance the ability of Member States and the public at large to become more acquainted with the practice and work of the Council in the areas mentioned before.

14. In spite of the limited resources available for its elaboration but consistent with the intention of General Assembly resolution 686(VII) of 1952 [to make the evidence of customary international law more readily available], we are further exploring improvements to our website with a view to making the information on the *Repertoire* more promptly and easily accessible to a broader audience.

15. Throughout the year, the Branch also responded to numerous requests for information from Member States, United Nations staff, students, academic scholars and researchers on questions relating to both the current and past practice of the Council and its subsidiary organs. In addition, the Branch contributed to the training of the incoming elected members of the Security Council in December 2016[and to the annual training programme for the staff of the Government of the State of Palestine (authorized by General Assembly resolution 70/13 of 12 December 2017) in October 2016].

16. Esteemed Chair, distinguished delegates, I would also like to underline that the progress made in the preparation and publication of the *Repertoire* as well as the updating of the *Repertoire* section of the Council website would not have been possible without the contributions received to the Trust Fund for the Updating of the *Repertoire*. Thanks to the funds available in the Trust Fund, the Branch was able to retain the services of an Associate

Political Affairs Officer who has been instrumental in preventing new backlogs from forming. However, the Branch faces a heavy workload in sustaining a regular *Repertoire* publication schedule, in keeping the *Repertoire* website up-to-date in all languages and in continuing to improve the accessibility of information about the practice of the Council.

17. In light of the workload [and given the small size of the Branch], we continue to be highly dependent on voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund established by the General Assembly in resolution 54/106. We are very grateful to those Member States who have generously contributed to the Trust Fund over the years, and we strongly encourage all Member States to contribute to the Trust Fund or to consider sponsorship of an Associate Expert for the Branch. In this regard, we are truly grateful for the contributions made to the Trust Fund since our last briefing in 2016 by Turkey and China. Furthermore, we are extremely grateful to China for its sponsorship of an Associate Expert since September 2015, who is making a very valuable contribution to advancing our work.

18. Esteemed Chairperson, distinguished delegates, we welcome your feedback on our work. I would like to highlight that, beyond this briefing; the Branch stands ready to assist you with information and guidance on all procedural and constitutional aspects of the current as well as past practice of the Security Council.

Thank you.