CONCEPT NOTE

UN SECURITY COUNCIL ARRIA-FORMULA MEETING ON PENHOLDERSHIP

| Date:  | August 11, 2022 |
| Time:  | 10.00 – 13.00 |
| Venue: | In-person meeting in the ECOSOC Chamber |
| Participation: |
  - All Member States are welcome to attend and speak
  - Working languages: interpretation will be served into all six official languages
  - The meeting will be webcast on UN WebTV, recorded and available to the media.

Background:

Since 2006, the Security Council has made steady progress in areas related to efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness of its working methods in order to maintain effective functioning of the Council. Subsequently, considerable work has been done to identify possible gaps and consolidate practical proposals in one comprehensive compendium known as the Presidential Note 507.

Against this backdrop, the issue of penholdership remains a challenging one. Penholdership continues to be an informal arrangement that is supposed to reflect shared responsibility and collective engagement. It is linked directly to the issue of fair burden-sharing and equal distribution of work among all members of the Security Council.

The revised Presidential Note 507 contains provisions focused on equal opportunity for full and meaningful participation of all Council members in the preparation of Council documents.
Meanwhile, there is an evident gap between the implementation of the Presidential Note 507 and all subsequently adopted notes of the Council and the reality. In practice, first and foremost on country-specific dossiers, the pen is held largely by the three permanent members of the Security Council. The sole exception is Afghanistan.

Certainly, in recent years, there have been some positive developments in the penholder system. Few co-penholder positions became available to other members of the Council, including those from the region, which proved its effectiveness. Nevertheless, it has not changed substantively the overall situation on this track. Provisions of the Presidential note 507 providing opportunity for every member of the Council to be a penholder remain unimplemented.

It is worth mentioning that despite some timely adjustments the Presidential note 507 does not provide any concrete recommendations on the selection of penholders. Given informal character of the process, in most cases it is an individual decision of the member of the Council to initiate and chair the informal drafting process. Hence, it remains unclear, whether it is compatible with the own views of the countries on the agenda. Meanwhile, there have been cases like Colombia, when the country on the agenda made its own choice of the penholder.

Methods of work used by the pens for drafting are also frequently questioned. According to the Presidential note 507 the drafting of documents should be carried out in unbiased and transparent manner while ensuring the exchange of information among all Security Council members, engaging in timely discussions with openness and flexibility and providing sufficient time for comprehensive expert assessment. There is also lack of clarity on how the views of the host countries, regional actors and representatives of the UN Secretariat should be taken into account.

Revisiting the issue of informal penholdership and systematic restructuring of this arrangement would help improve the effectiveness of the Security Council. The
ultimate objective is to help the Council make appropriate, effective and timely decisions and the Secretariat receive clear mandates.

**Objective:**

Security Council members and wider UN membership are invited. The Arria-Formula meeting will give an opportunity for Member States to provide their views and assessments and practical proposals aimed at ensuring better burden-sharing and more equal distribution of work of the Council, as set out in the Note 507, and enhancing its transparency efficiency.

**Program:**

- **Welcoming remarks:** H.E. Mr. Vassily Nebenzia, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations
  - **Statements by UNSC members** followed by **other interested UN Member States**
  - **Q&A:** Interventions are suggested to be limited to 5 minutes
  - **Closing remarks:** H.E. Mr. Vassily Nebenzia