

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 2 June 2025 from the Permanent Representative of
Guyana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I am pleased to transmit for your attention the concept note for the high-level open debate of the Security Council on the theme “Poverty, underdevelopment and conflict: implications for the maintenance of international peace and security”, to be convened on 19 June 2025 by the delegation of Guyana in its capacity as President of the Council for June 2025 (see annex).

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

(Signed) Carolyn **Rodrigues-Birkett**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 2 June 2025 from the Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council high-level open debate on the theme “Poverty, underdevelopment and conflict: implications for the maintenance of international peace and security”, 19 June 2025

Introduction

In its capacity as President of the Security Council and in line with the overall theme of its Security Council tenure, “Partnering for peace and prosperity”, Guyana will organize a high-level open debate on 19 June 2025 focused on the theme “Poverty, underdevelopment and conflict: implications for the maintenance of international peace and security”.

There is broad consensus that there can be no peace without sustainable development and no sustainable development without peace. The Security Council itself has underlined that security and development are closely interlinked, mutually reinforcing and key to attaining sustainable peace.¹ At the same time, it is also widely understood that many conflicts are directly linked to inadequate development owing to extreme poverty, distribution disparity, the lack of employment opportunities and poor infrastructure.

The objective of the meeting is to further interrogate the relationship between sustainable development and international peace and security with a view to highlighting the critical issues on which the Security Council should focus in this context, and where the Council can ensure that its discussions, decisions and mandates align with previously established decisions and commitments.

The meeting will also provide a platform for States Members of the United Nations and other participants to offer perspectives on how the Council could carry forward its commitment to improve synergies with other United Nations organs and advisory bodies such as the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, so as to ensure that the deep-rooted factors that drive and sustain protracted and violent conflicts are effectively addressed.

June 2025 will mark the eightieth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations. That anniversary provides an important opportunity for stocktaking and for the Security Council to examine how, in the exercise of its mandate, it can complement a more robust and coordinated United Nations system-wide approach to: (a) prevent violent conflict by supporting economic, social and political transformations; (b) protect development gains and prepare for early recovery during active conflicts; and (c) promote long-term war-to-peace transitions and other actions that would prevent a return to violence.² The meeting will also build upon earlier discussions and decisions related to the security-development nexus, which will include identifying new ways in which the Council could carry forward the implementation of those decisions and enhance the capacities of Member States to prevent a return to conflict and achieve sustainable peace.

The event is being convened at a time when the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 faces several setbacks; at the same time, conflicts are increasing and the demand for humanitarian aid continues to outpace available

¹ Statement by the President of the Security Council, 11 February 2011 ([S/PRST/2011/4](#)).

² United Nations Development Programme, “Development as a pathway for conflict prevention and recovery: Regional Bureau for Arab States Framework” (2023).

resources. The meeting will therefore continue the discussions on the prevention and sustaining peace agendas, premised on the view that tackling poverty and underdevelopment is an important conflict prevention tool. Every \$1 invested in prevention, through policy efforts to promote macroeconomic stability and growth, strengthen institutions and support local community development, can save between \$26 and \$103 in possible conflict-related costs, including the cost of ballooning humanitarian needs and lost economic output.³ It is appropriate to recall that the Security Council has recognized that conflict prevention strategies should address the root causes of armed conflict and political and social crises in a comprehensive manner, including by promoting sustainable development and poverty eradication.⁴

Background

As early as 1997, the Council recognized the relevance of development issues in the exercise of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Since then, the Council has deliberated on myriad related subjects, including the role of business in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding; natural resources and conflict; promoting sustainable peace through common development; climate change, food insecurity and conflict; exclusion, inequality and conflict; global, regional and national aspects of conflict prevention, which looked at, inter alia, the root causes of conflict and the interlinkages with poverty, inequality and development. More than 30 open debates have been held on this topic in the past 20 years and a number of resolutions and presidential statements have been adopted, including the following: [S/PRST/2024/2](#) (23 May 2024); resolution [2282 \(2016\)](#); [S/PRST/2011/2](#) (21 January 2011); [S/PRST/2010/20](#) (13 October 2010); [S/PRST/2010/18](#) (23 September 2010); and [S/PRST/2010/7](#) (16 April 2010).

Outside of the Security Council, there has also been a substantial focus on the interconnection between development and international peace and security and how violent conflicts often intersect with poverty and underdevelopment. In the *World Social Report 2025*, it is projected that an escalation of ongoing conflicts or the eruption of new conflicts will bring more reversals in the global quest to eradicate poverty, while in the 2024 report on the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, it is stated that conflict and poverty often exacerbate each other in a destructive cycle. Conflict directly aggravates poverty by adversely affecting the economy and widening inequality. Conflicts diminish a population's productive capacity through the direct loss of life; damage to schools, hospitals and other civilian infrastructure; and the disruption of economic activities, including decreased agricultural output and reduced manufacturing capacity.

While recognizing that the prevention of conflict is the primary responsibility of States and that national Governments and authorities have the responsibility to identify, drive and direct priorities, strategies and activities for peacebuilding and sustaining peace, it must be borne in mind that the Security Council also has a prevention mandate and the responsibility to respond to early warnings provided by the Secretary-General or other United Nations organs. Moreover, the Council has affirmed its support for endeavours aimed at enhancing the preventive capacities of Member States, the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, including by developing their early warning, assessment, mediation and response

³ Hannes Mueller and others, "The urgency of conflict prevention: a macroeconomic perspective" International Monetary Fund Working Papers No. WP/24/256 (2024).

⁴ Statement by the President of the Security Council, 22 September 2011 ([S/PRST/2011/18](#)).

capabilities,⁵ thereby giving the Council a legitimate interest in the realization of these objectives and their alignment with Security Council actions.

Guiding questions

Member States may wish to reflect on the following questions in their interventions:

- As we approach the eightieth anniversary of the United Nations, how can the United Nations enhance coordination in its conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peacekeeping activities to better promote sustainable peace and development?
- Which concrete steps can the Council take in relation to mission mandates to strengthen the foundation for durable peace and contribute to other efforts aimed at promoting economic development and sustainable peace?
- How can the Security Council collaborate with other United Nations organs and bodies to heighten its early warning and conflict analysis capabilities and what new tools can be leveraged in this regard?
- The causes of conflict differ in character and scope between contexts and types of conflicts; which specific steps can the Security Council take to be able to better analyse and understand the root causes and drivers of conflict in a given context and ensure that they inform its decisions and mandates?

Format

The open debate will be chaired by the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Mohamed Irfaan Ali. High-level participation from Security Council members and other participating Member and observer States is encouraged.

The list of speakers for the open debate will open at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, 16 June 2025. Member States wishing to be inscribed on the list of speakers should do so through the e-Speakers module on e-deleGATE. A letter duly signed by the Permanent Representative or Chargé d'affaires a.i. and addressed to the President of the Security Council should accompany the request.

In order to guarantee the participation of as many Member States as possible, participants are encouraged to limit their statements to a maximum of four minutes.

Briefers

Briefers will be drawn from the United Nations and the African Union.

⁵ Statement by the President of the Security Council of 23 September 2010 ([S/PRST/2010/18](#)).