BRAZIL

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

General Assembly debate on agenda item 28
Report of the Security Council

21 November 2014

Mr. President,

I would like to start by thanking the Permanent Representative of Australia and President of the Security Council for the month of November, Ambassador Gary Quinlan, for presenting the Annual Report of the Security Council, which covers a period of intense activity in the domain of international peace and security.

The transparency and accountability of the Security Council to the general membership is a matter to which Brazil ascribes great importance. In this sense, we believe that the annual report - by providing a comprehensive account of the Council's activities to the General Assembly - represents an important tool to enhance the body's accountability vis-à-vis the 178 Member States that do not regularly take part in its deliberations.

We have also long been supportive of improvements in the Council's working methods in order to make it less opaque and more democratic. The report makes it clear that attempts continue to be made to reach out to the wider membership and we note with satisfaction the number of public meetings, open debates, wrap-up sessions and consultations with troop and police contributing countries that are being held. However, it is essential to deepen and broaden this trend in order for Council decisions to be more effective and legitimate.

Mr. President,

After almost four years of conflict, fighting in Syria has created a perverse combination of death, suffering and destruction, and resulted in millions of internally displaced persons and refugees.

As the situation on the ground further deteriorates, the Council's chronic inability to act
promptly and substantively is seen by many as an illustration of a worrisome pattern of dysfunctionality.

It took 15 months for the Council to endorse the Geneva Communiqué which had been approved by consensus in June 2012, and has since been considered the most rational roadmap for a political settlement to the Syria crisis. Similar delays were involved in the adoption of resolution 2139 and 2165 (2014) which allowed for humanitarian aid to be delivered to the civilian population.

Despite their irrefutable importance, these resolutions fall short from dealing with some of the most crucial aspects of the Syrian conflict. While the political process remains paralyzed and human rights violations are relentlessly committed, the flow of weapons to all belligerent parties continues resulting in more violence, instability and suffering.

In other words, the militarization of the conflict proceeds with the tacit (or not so tacit) approval of Council members. How long will it take for the Security Council to adopt a common position against the continuing militarization of the crisis?

In Iraq we are also witnessing a severe deterioration of the security and humanitarian situations with the expansion of extremism and the spread of terrorist activities. The crisis is a stark reminder of the unpredictable consequences of unilateral actions – as the one undertaken in 2003. It is our duty to support Iraq in its efforts to overcome the crisis and combat terrorism in a way that is fully and strictly compatible with the UN Charter.

Mr. President,

During the period covered by the report, once again the situation in the Middle East deteriorated amid increasing tensions and threats to international peace and security in different parts of the region.

The brief hope that emerged from the resumption of direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians in July 2013 quickly dispelled due to the parties' failure in dealing with the essential elements of the conflict. As a result, the international community witnessed yet another devastating war in Gaza – the third in five years. The conflict not only undermined the perspectives for talks, but also fed the cycle of violence and left an intolerable legacy of civilian deaths, destruction and displacement.

While the Security Council held a significant number of meetings on the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, its deliberations have had little influence on the ground. Had its past resolutions on the matter been fully implemented, illegal unilateral actions may not have reigned with impunity; the situation may not have become so tragic; and the gap between the parties may not have grown so wide.

Brazil expects the Council to play a leading role on this issue, actively supporting and steering the peace process, while positioning itself firmly against the "status quo".
As the recent deterioration in Jerusalem and elsewhere shows the current situation is neither sustainable nor acceptable. Brazil condemns all acts of terrorism, including the attack that took place on November 18 in a synagogue in West Jerusalem, which claimed the lives of five Israelis and left eight people injured. We firmly believe that only the implementation of the two-State solution will bring durable peace and security to Israel and Palestine, and put an end to the suffering of the civilian population on both sides.

Let us not forget also that the protection of civilians must be implemented in a universal and non-selective manner. The commendable emphasis placed by the Security Council on the protection of civilians in other items of its agenda cannot be sidestepped when it comes to the responsibility to protect the Palestinian people.

Mr. President,

I would also like to address the issue of the relationship between the Security Council and the International Criminal Court, especially its referrals and deferrals mechanisms.

The Security Council should strive to preserve a balance between, on the one hand, upholding instruments of international criminal justice such as the ICC while, on the other, responding with wisdom to requests that are legally sound and meet with wide political support. Brazil is convinced that there is institutional space to defuse polarization, ensuring respect for international law and the rule of law, and addressing legitimate the questions raised by regional groups.

In this context, the fact that in November 2013 the Security Council failed to approve the deferrals of the Kenyan cases proved to be an avoidable misstep. That draft resolution, that would not have precluded the proceedings, but just postponed them could have represented a confidence building manifestation.

On a more positive note, let me refer briefly to the situation in Guinea-Bissau, where the Security Council, working in partnership with the UN team on the ground under the leadership of former SRSG Ramos Horta and close attention by the PBC, contributed to the restoration of constitutional order. As a close friend of Guinea-Bissau’s, Brazil is encouraged to witness the full reengagement of the international partners with the country, which became clear in meetings that were held here in New York this week. We would like once again to express our support to the efforts that are being undertaken by the new authorities with a view to ensure the stability, development, institutional progress and prosperity of Bissau-Guineans.

As I have previously mentioned to the Council in my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, I believe that Guinea-Bissau provides us with a good example of how constructive and complementary the interactions between the Security Council and the PBC can be. This relationship is certainly worth strengthening, in order for the Council to better take advantage of the advisory and early-warning roles that the PBC can and is playing.
Finally, Mr. President, let me point out that one cannot discuss the work undertaken by the Security Council without mentioning the growing frustration among Member States and among civil society with the absence of a satisfactory answer by the Council to some specific crises around the world, as in the aforementioned situations in Syria and in Palestine. The task to reform the structures of the Council remains urgent. As we approach the watershed year of 2015, Brazil wishes to, once again, call of Member States to embrace the opportunity provided by the 70th anniversary of this Organization to finally adapt the Security Council to the geopolitical realities of 21st century, making it a more legitimate and representative body, truly capable of addressing contemporary challenges.

I thank you.