

Draft – Greece’s statement to HLR event 31 October

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank Ambassador Sauer for introducing me and to welcome all of you here today.

At the outset, I wish to stress that Greece, as a country strongly devoted to the primacy of international law and the rule of law, firmly believes that sanctions used in a manner compatible with the United Nations Charter, International Human Rights law, and the rule of law, can reinforce the integrity of the United Nations and contribute to the maintenance or restoration of international peace and security.

Greece’s support for ensuring more effective United Nations sanctions is enduring, from our chairmanship of Sanctions Committees and the Informal Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions, from 2005 to 2006, which produced ‘Guidelines for the implementation of UN Sanctions’ which are cited even today in UN Security Council resolutions; to our Symposium in 2007 on ‘Enhancing the Implementation of Security Council Sanctions’.

In each of these endeavours, our purpose was to build on our previous work and to collaborate with others in ensuring that this principal tool of the international community, sanctions, retains its credibility and legitimacy.

As with previous processes focused on sanctions, the HLR has already begun to bear fruit, which is evinced by the fact that a UN Inter-Agency Task Force was formed in response to the HLR, and has come together over a number of months, to elaborate common positions and recommendations for collaborating in the effort on more effective UN sanctions, which we will be hearing more about shortly.

Allow me to say that Greece is very pleased with Germany’s decision to co-chair working Group 3, specifically on the humanitarian aspects of sanctions. Germany will no doubt speak about this in more detail; so I will

elaborate on the topics on the Working Group 3 agenda which have been Greece's focus, namely, 'Coordination of UN sanctions with regional organizations' and 'Emerging sanctions issues.'

But first a few words about form, before moving into the substance. In conducting our work, we have tried to make this as inclusive a process as possible. We have consulted a wide cast of actors, state members of the Security Council, and many other UN Member States; UN departments; and agencies; regional organizations; and civil society actors.

Working Group 3 has held three meetings, two in New York and the most recent, in October in Athens. Between these meetings, we consulted with a range of actors and elicited written contributions and engagement in the dialogue on the Working Group web page.

Very importantly, we included practitioners with extensive field experience in the implementation of sanctions and humanitarian mandates. We heard from former and current members of Panels of Experts and benefited from their practical experience in dealing with tensions that can impede the collaboration between sanctions and humanitarian actors. We were fortunate to hear their fresh views and insights that sometimes challenge our ingrained policies and procedures.

On the first topic of 'Coordination of UN sanctions with regional organizations', it is important for me to emphasize at the outset that the purpose of exploring this topic and the focus of our deliberations has been to foster the flow of information so as to improve the assistance that regional organizations can provide their member states in the implementation of United Nations sanctions.

Similarly, our discussions on enhancing fairness and clarity in procedures with regard to listings and delistings were geared toward enhancing the implementation of UN sanctions.

In this regard, participants in our deliberations made the important point that there is no inherent conflict between Chapter VII obligations and human rights obligations; and that, notwithstanding improvements made

to date, more efforts must be made to reconcile the human rights and due process challenges highlighted by various regional and national courts in order to ensure the consistency of the UN sanctions regimes with international human rights and humanitarian law, in accordance with the Charter and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

Among our findings was that in order to ensure that regional organizations are in a position to implement UN listings, more transparency is required from the UN on the information/evidence which forms the basis for individual listings. In this respect, it is of particular importance that cooperation of regional organizations with the UN Sanctions Committees and the UN Ombudsperson be intensified and deepened.

Participants also discussed the need for greater clarity and transparency on the criteria for delisting; extension of the functions of the De-Listing Focal Point on exemptions to all Sanctions Committees other than Al-Qaida; and consideration of the expansion of the role of the Ombudsperson to other Sanctions Committees.

On 'Emerging Sanctions Issues', our findings included the need to address transnational threats and new technologies, including the use of the internet for illicit activities, bearing in mind the need to respect human rights and to engage the private sector in addressing such threats in the implementation of sanctions.

We also discussed the need to expand the exchange of information and use of existing tools and databases to explore links between various criminal activities such as the exploitation of natural resources and organized crime, trafficking in arms and human beings, and cyber crimes, in the implementation of sanctions.

In this regard, one important outcome of the discussions was the need for additional resources to meet the requisite technical and substantive skills needed to strengthen the Secretariat's capacity to assist the sanctions bodies including the panels of experts, and for the Panels themselves to have the requisite resources and technical expertise to carry out the increasing demands of their mandates.

An important issue was also raised by some practitioners who suggested that the protection of women can be improved through enhanced coordination with all assistance providers in conflict regions and backed up with a credible threat of sanctions for those who impede these protection mandates.

As we move now into the next stage of drafting the overall report of the working group, we will work with our Co-Chair, Germany, to elaborate findings and advance options based on deliberations over the entire Working Group 3 process and in doing so, will continue our practice of fostering inclusiveness and collaboration, taking as many views and voices on board as possible, and formulating practical compromises.

Thank you.