

(4) Background Note on “Arria-formula” meetings

INFORMAL NON-PAPER*

25 October 2002

Background Note on “ARRIA-FORMULA” MEETINGS OF SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

The “Arria-formula meetings” are a relatively recent practice of the members of the Security Council. Like the informal consultations of the whole of the Security Council, they are not envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations or the Security Council’s provisional rules of procedure. Under Article 30 of the Charter, however, the Council is the master of its own procedure and has the latitude to determine its own practices.

The “Arria-formula meetings” are very informal, confidential gatherings which enable Security Council members to have a frank and private exchange of views, within a flexible procedural framework, with persons whom the inviting member or members of the Council (who also act as the facilitators or convenors) believe it would be beneficial to hear and/or to whom they may wish to convey a message. They provide interested Council members an opportunity to engage in a direct dialogue with high representatives of Governments and international organizations – often at the latter’s request - as well as non-State parties, on matters with which they are concerned and which fall within the purview of responsibility of the Security Council.

The process is named after Ambassador Diego Arria of Venezuela, who, as the representative of Venezuela on the Council

(1992-1993), initiated the practice in 1992. Although Ambassador Arria, as the then President of the Security Council, had himself convened in 1992 an “Arria-formula meeting”, the recent practice suggests a preference for such initiatives to be taken by members of the Council other than the President. The convening member is also chairing such meetings.

The “Arria-formula meetings” differ from the consultations of the whole of the Council in the following respects:

- Such informal gatherings do not constitute an activity of the Council and are convened at the initiative of a member or members of the Council. Participation in such meetings is for individual members to decide upon and there have been instances when some members chose not to attend.
- They are held in a Conference Room, and not in the Security Council Consultation Room.
- The convenor issues a written invitation to the other fourteen members, indicating the place, date and time of the “Arria-formula meeting”, as well as the name of the party to be heard, by a fax from his/her Mission rather than by notification from the Secretariat.
- They are not announced in the daily Journal of the United Nations.
- Unless so invited, members of the Secretariat are not expected to attend, except for interpreters and a Conference Officer.

* Prepared by the Secretariat.