



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

15 September 2014

Dear Colleagues,

As I announced at our 26 August 2014 meeting, I have decided to introduce some changes to the Policy Committee so as to bring it in line with the evolution in the overall decision-making architecture at Headquarters in New York.

Since its inception a decade ago, the Policy Committee has functioned as the key forum to consider strategic and policy issues, both thematic and country-specific and has served as an extremely valuable tool for supporting my decision-making process and follow-up.

The extremely time-sensitive and emergency-driven nature of the challenges often facing the Organization demands a rapidity of response for which the Policy Committee process is not optimal. As such, drawing in part on feedback provided by my senior advisers, I have over the past number of years established a series of other fora through which the counsel of senior advisers is sought and which informs decision-making.

The Deputy Secretary-General and Chef de Cabinet have been actively engaged in shaping this evolution and I am grateful to them for their efforts and those of the Policy Committee Secretariat in refining this decision-making tool to respond to situational contexts. In light of these developments, the time has come to formally adapt the Policy Committee to these new realities while preserving its value as the most appropriate forum to comprehensively address policy issues of a cross-cutting nature. The focus of the Committee will therefore shift towards thematic items, although we will still continue to consider country-specific items as the need arises. We will make more use of the Committee to bridge the three pillars of our work – peace, development and human rights – and to ensure that we are working together and in alignment in an integrated manner on issues that concern us all.

This will entail reconfirming and strictly adhering to certain conditions: that the Policy Committee meetings should only take place when an item is ripe for consideration, once the key stakeholders have been consulted on the issue and once implications of any proposed decisions – including financial and legal – have been duly considered. It is also important that different views and options be clearly considered and articulated and that actionable decisions emerge from the meetings.

Members of the Policy Committee

S-G letter to Members  
of the Policy Committee

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Approved by:

14/09/2014

Date

Most critically, the agenda for the Policy Committee must correspond to our core strategic, cross-cutting concerns. To this end, I count on you as senior advisers to engage personally in setting the agenda. As part of this process, I invite you to propose items for the forward agenda for the remainder of the year and into 2015.

Once on the agenda, items must be prepared with the benefit of clear guidance so that the submission papers clearly identify the key issues. I therefore expect that principals will provide guidance throughout the consultation process on individual items so that we can make the best use of this important mechanism. Our objective must be to take the right decisions on the right issues at the right time.

In the same spirit, I expect principals to attend meetings of the Policy Committee when they are present at Headquarters. The Deputy Secretary-General will continue to serve as alternative Chair of the Committee when I am not in New York. The Chef de Cabinet will also chair in the event that neither I nor the Deputy Secretary-General is available.

I thank you for your continued contribution to this key forum.

Yours sincerely,



BAN/Ki-moon