Germany in the UN Security Council*

On 12 October Germany was voted as a new member onto the United Nations Security Council, together with Portugal, India, Colombia and South Africa.

Since 1st January 2011 Germany serves as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for a period of two years. The Federal Government pursues five priorities during Germany’s membership of the UN Security Council from 2011-2012:

1. Peace, security, and crisis management

World peace and security are the bread-and-butter issues of the Security Council. Germany wants to do its part in ensuring that the Security Council responds in a responsible manner to international crises and conflicts. This applies to regions such as the Balkans, Afghanistan, the Middle East and Iran, but also to Africa, for example with regard to the referendum in Southern Sudan in January 2011. In Germany’s view, the Security Council must issue effective guidelines for international missions under UN mandate and be convincing in its role as defender of UN sanctions.

2. Issues with global relevance

Debates within the Security Council play an important role in providing a catalyst when it comes to core international issues. For instance, President Obama initiated a debate on disarmament in September 2009, during the US Presidency of the Security Council. Germany’s focus is that the Security Council should concern itself particularly with the theme of “peacebuilding”, i.e. peacekeeping following conflicts – including conflict prevention, disarmament and non-proliferation, climate protection and security, as well as the fight against terrorism.

3. Humanitarian concerns

Germany is particularly keen to be involved in the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. Germany’s priority here is to deal effectively with the problem of the exploitation of children as child soldiers.

* Source: German Foreign Ministry
4. UN Reform

If the United Nations wants to remain the first port of call when tackling global issues, then it needs a thorough overhaul. Continents such as Africa, Latin American and Asia are underrepresented in the Security Council. There is a need for action here.

In 2011, Brazil, India and Germany, three of the four so-called G4 countries (those three countries plus Japan) which consider a thoroughgoing reform of the Security Council to be necessary will be members of the Security Council. The Federal Government wants to take advantage of this particular constellation of countries in order to lend new impetus to United Nations reform.

Germany’s long-term goal in the course of a complete overhaul of the UN Security Council is a joint seat for the EU on the Security Council. Until that objective is reached, Germany is constantly prepared to assume more responsibility.

5. Transparency and openness

The more the work and decisions of the Security Council are carried out in a clear and transparent manner, the more easily they will find acceptance. Germany wishes to carry out its membership of the Security Council in as transparent a way as possible and sees itself as a natural contact point for all members of the UN and especially for the EU member states. The Federal Government will pursue a Europe-friendly policy in the Security Council and work hard to reach close agreement with its European partners in keeping with a common European foreign policy.