



**Arria Formula Meeting on Upholding the Sanctity of Treaties for the Maintenance of International Peace and Security Organized by Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations**

**Concept Note**

**(Date: 30 January 2026)**

**(Time: 10:00–13:00 hrs)**

**(Venue: Conference Room #11)**

The sanctity of international treaties constitutes one of the oldest and most authoritative foundations of international law. Treaties embody obligations between sovereign States, agreed upon to regulate relations, prevent disputes, and protect shared interests.

2. The UN Charter reinforces this obligation. Article 2(2) requires all Members to fulfil in good faith their obligations under the Charter, while Chapters VI and VII underscore the centrality of peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for agreements, and the prevention of threats to international peace and security. General Assembly declarations and resolutions, including the Rule of Law at the national and international levels, have repeatedly reaffirmed that treaties remain binding and must not be unilaterally suspended or modified.

3. The principle of *pacta sunt servanda*, codified in Article 26 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, requires that treaties in force must be performed in good faith. This principle is fundamental to legal certainty, mutual trust, and the predictability on which peaceful inter-State relations and conduct of international affairs depend. Complementing this, Article 27 prohibits the invocation of internal law as a justification for non-performance, reinforcing the supremacy of international obligations once undertaken.

4. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has repeatedly affirmed that *pacta sunt servanda* is not merely a technical requirement, but a structural principle of international relations in its various judgments and advisory opinions. It has emphasized that unilateral suspension or holding obligations in abeyance without agreement of the other party is impermissible unless consistent with treaty provisions; good faith must guide treaty performance; obligations deriving from treaties and the

Charter remain in force and cannot be set aside on grounds of convenience or policy; and disputes relating to treaty interpretation must be settled through lawful means rather than unilateral action.

5. Yet, in recent years, a disturbing pattern has emerged. Treaty commitments have been diluted through selective interpretation, unilateral administrative or legislative action, delayed implementation or holding in abeyance of implementation as well as the bypassing of agreed dispute resolution mechanisms. Agreements governing international obligations, humanitarian, and development issues, shared natural resources, security arrangements, demilitarized zones, and borders have come under pressure. In several cases, dispute settlement procedures established within treaties have been disregarded, eroding trust, and threatening international peace and security.

6. These trends are not without consequence. When treaties are weakened, so too are the frameworks that sustain peace and cooperation. The risks include heightened regional tensions, escalation of unresolved disputes, economic consequences, disruption of access to vital shared natural resources, and the creation of humanitarian vulnerabilities. The consequences fall most heavily on affected communities, including populations living in conflict situations. The erosion of treaty obligations also undermines preventive diplomacy and weakens the credibility of international institutions.

7. In an era of geopolitical competition, preserving the sanctity of treaties is essential for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is through the faithful performance of agreements that States maintain stable relations, avoid conflict, and uphold a rules-based international order. This Arria-formula meeting aims to examine current challenges and identify ways the United Nations and its Member States can advance respect for treaty obligations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

## **Objectives**

8. The meeting will aim to:

- i. Reaffirm the binding nature of treaties under international law and the centrality of *pacta sunt servanda*.
- ii. Identify current trends and challenges affecting the implementation of international treaties and their impact on maintenance of international peace and security.
- iii. Deliberate upon the legal implications of unilateral interpretations, suspension, or holding obligations in abeyance, in light of ICJ jurisprudence.

- iv. Highlight the implications of non-compliance on international peace and security, including erosion of trust, increased risks of conflict, and humanitarian consequences.
- v. Discuss the role of dispute settlement mechanisms, including arbitration, tribunals, and technical bodies established under treaties.
- vi. Discuss avenues for strengthening the role of the United Nations, including the Council, in monitoring and promoting compliance with international treaties for the maintenance of international peace and security.

## **Guiding Questions**

9. The Discussion shall be guided by the following questions:

- (a) What are the implications for international peace and security when treaties are not respected or are unilaterally reinterpreted?
- (b) What role can UN bodies, including Security Council, the Secretary General and international courts play in ensuring respect for legally binding agreements?
- (c) What lessons emerge from ICJ judgments regarding good faith performance, suspension of obligations, and treaty integrity?
- (d) How can dispute settlement mechanisms provided within treaties be better utilized to prevent non-adherence?
- (e) What are some of the best practices demonstrating the contribution of treaty compliance to regional stability, resource management, and peaceful relations?
- (f) How can early warning, transparency, monitoring, and technical cooperation reduce threats to international peace and security arising from treaty violations?
- (g) How can international community collectively reinforce confidence in international agreements and deter unilateral modification or non-performance?

## **Briefers**

TBC

## **Modalities**

10. The Arria- formula meeting will be chaired by Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations. All UN Member States and Permanent Observers, as well as UN agencies are invited to participate. High- level attendance is encouraged.

11. Following the panelists' interventions, members of the Security Councils will be invited to take the floor, followed by other interested delegations and organizations, time permitting. If the list of speakers is not exhausted, those unable to speak orally are encouraged to submit written statements. Interpretation into the six official languages of the UN will be provided.

12. To facilitate participation by as many delegations as possible, interventions should not exceed three minutes. Time management will be closely observed. The meeting is scheduled to last three hours.

13. The organizer will prepare an informal summary of the discussion, incorporating both oral statements and written submissions, to be shared with participating delegations.

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