

Concept Note

United Nations Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting on The Impact of Unilateralism and Bullying Practices on International Relations

Convened by the People's Republic of China

**Wednesday 23 April 2025, 10:00 - 13:00 EST
ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters**

Introduction

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the United Nations. The establishment of the UN, which demonstrated the collective commitment of the international community to ending the scourge of war, has laid the foundation for the basic norms of modern international relations anchored in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and sustained by the philosophy and practice of multilateralism. Over the decades, despite the shifting global dynamics and the ups and downs in our pursuit of peace and development, the UN has maintained its central role in coordinating international affairs, the world has largely remained peaceful and stable, and economic globalization has emerged as a defining trend of our era. Interdependence among nations and the vision of a shared future have become widely recognized and embraced, with win-win cooperation and common development serving as universal aspirations.

However, in recent years, the surge in unilateralism and bullying practices have severely undermined the UN-centered international system and the international order based on international law. Such actions have exacerbated tensions among states and threatened global peace and security. We have witnessed the disregard for basic norms of international relations and frequent resort to or threat of force against others. Withdrawals from critical international organizations and treaties have weakened the authority of multilateral institutions. The arbitrary politicization and weaponization of trade issues under the pretext of "national security", coupled with the abuse of long-arm jurisdiction, have destabilized global supply chains and disrupted international trade order.

Notably, recent actions by the U.S. government—such as imposing baseline tariffs on all imports and levying so-called "reciprocal tariffs" on certain countries, as well as further imposing excessively high tariffs in response to the legitimate countermeasures by affected states—disregard the carefully negotiated balance of interests achieved through years of multilateral trade negotiations and the fact that the U.S. has long benefited substantially from international trade. By weaponizing tariffs as a tool of extreme pressure, the U.S. has gravely

violated international trade rules, and triggered severe shocks and turbulence in the world economy and multilateral trading system, casting a shadow over the global efforts for peace and development.

All countries, particularly developing nations, are victims of unilateralism and bullying practices. For too long, developing countries—especially vulnerable states—have suffered from the lack of sufficient voice in international affairs and weaker positions in global trade and supply chains. In light of the uneven economic development and strengths, unilateral trade policies risk widening the wealth gap between nations and severely undermining the progress toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As emphasized by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), "Trade must not become another source of instability. It should serve development and global growth." The international community must address the risks of social disorder and conflict arising from economic hardships in vulnerable countries, and take concrete actions to help developing countries enhance their resilience, thereby strengthening the foundation for lasting peace.

Five years ago, world leaders unanimously adopted the Declaration on the Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, stressing that our challenges are interconnected and can only be addressed through reinvigorated multilateralism. In September 2024, the UN Summit of the Future adopted the Pact for the Future, proposing ambitious initiatives to revitalize multilateralism. In the face of chaos and challenges posed by unilateralism and bullying, the international community must unite to uphold multilateralism, defend the basic norms of international relations, safeguard international fairness and justice, promote an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, and jointly protect the legitimate rights and interests of all nations under international law.

Objectives

The meeting will provide a platform for Security Council members and the broader UN membership to:

1. Deepen understanding of the dangers posed by unilateralism and bullying practices.
2. Reaffirm commitment to multilateralism and the principles of the UN Charter.
3. Amplify calls to oppose all forms of unilateralism and bullying while upholding international fairness and justice.
4. Strengthen multilateral institutions, including the UN, to fulfill their essential roles.

Topics for Discussion

During the discussion, the participants are encouraged to engage on the following guiding questions:

1. How do arbitrary unilateral tariffs destabilize the global economy and multilateral systems, and what adverse impacts do they pose to international peace and security?
2. What measures should the UN, including the Security Council, take to effectively counter the impact of unilateralism and bullying on international relations and order?
3. How can developing nations be supported to mitigate shocks from unilateral economic measures, bolster social stability, enhance sustainable development resilience, and achieve lasting peace?

Format

All Member States of the United Nations as well as Observers are invited to attend. The meeting will be broadcast live on UN WebTV with interpretation in all six UN official languages.

Following the briefers, members of the Security Council will be invited to take the floor. Other delegations wishing to make an intervention are encouraged to inform the organizers in advance. To maximize participation, all delegations are encouraged to speak for no more than 3 minutes.

Registration

To register for attendance and speaking slots, please email zhengminghao85@gmail.com (cc: chineseemission@yahoo.com) by 11:00 AM on April 22, 2025, with the subject line: "The Impact of Unilateralism and Bullying Practices on International Relations."

Briefers

1. Jeffrey David Sachs, director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University and president of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.
2. Wang Huiyao, founder and president of Center for China and Globalization.