

Extending the UNSMIL mandate in Libya

Mr President, let me begin by saying that we welcome the very wide support for this resolution today from Council members, but let me also say that I'm surprised by the decision of Russia and China to abstain today.

I listened very carefully to the Russian Ambassador's explanation of his vote. Council members and Council colleagues will know that once the Russian Federation raised its concerns over the language in the resolution after it had gone on to silence, we were very quick as penholders to accommodate them. We understood the concern around consultation, and that's why we added new language to the resolution in response. And that new language makes clear that UNSMIL would only be involved in implementing a ceasefire "once agreed by the Libyan parties." I can't think of any way in which this does not make clear that there will need to be consultation with the Libyan parties or that they are not responsible for decisions about any ceasefire.

And I listened again to the explanation given by my distinguished colleague from China. There was indeed a number of requests from China to remove language supporting human rights, gender and on conflict-related sexual violence. We did indeed remove a number of those references at the request of China. But other members of the Council feel these are important issues. And although they had compromised in good faith to secure a consensus text, they were not ready to compromise to that degree.

So anyway, it is my hope and I hope I can ask our Russian and Chinese friends to join me in this hope that despite these abstentions, today, all Council members will support the resolution and they will support the new special envoy, who we hope will be appointed soon to work with the Libyan parties and external players to bring about a sustainable political settlement, which is what the Libyan people desperately need.

Thank you, Mr President.