

of the key tasks of the president is building consensus among SC members on issues both of substance (e.g. the content of SC decisions and positions) and procedure (e.g. how to order the Council's work, deciding when to meet and which items to include on the agenda). Other duties include:

- agenda-building;
- chairing Council meetings (formal and informal);
- acting as the Council's spokesperson;
- designating members of a subsidiary organ (e.g. chairs of sanctions committees);
- appealing to parties of a conflict to exercise restraint or respect decisions of the Council, or meeting with them with a view to easing tensions.

The president is also his/her country's representative, a role which must be balanced with the neutrality of the presidency. In recent years, Council members have used their presidency to sponsor "thematic debates" on cross-cutting security policy issues of special interest to them.

*See annex "A" for the assignment of presidencies in 1999.*

### ***The Secretary-General (SG):***

As the chief administrative officer of the United Nations, the SG serves both the SC and the General Assembly. With the assistance of the UN Secretariat, the SG plays a key role in the day-to-day functioning of the SC, performing both a political and administrative role (much as the Clerk of the Privy Council is to the Prime Minister). The SG is the senior-most international civil servant to the SC, providing it with advice and carrying out its instructions. The SG has the authority to bring matters which he considers a threat to international peace and security to the attention of the SC (he can do so on behalf of other member states, though this is usually done through the presidency). He is also entitled to make statements to the SC on any matter it is considering. The SG's administrative duties include:

- providing SC members notice of Council meetings (and meetings of its subsidiary organs);
- drawing up the provisional agenda for Council meetings for the approval of the President and communicating it to Council members;
- preparing documents required or requested by the Council;
- providing weekly summary statements on matters of which the Council is seized and the stage reached in their consideration;
- bringing applications for UN membership to the attention of the Council;
- Liaising with the Secretariat on UN matters.

### ***The Secretariat:***

The SG oversees key UN Secretariat bodies such as the Department of Political