



Statement by H.E. Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti,

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at the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in
the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council

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Mr. President,

I thank you for convening this meeting. I also express my sincere appreciation to Ambassadors Jahan, Muñoz, Olhaye and Salgueiro for the extensive consultations on the rather complex issue of Security Council reform.

I would like to make some comments on the report and on the next steps, as per your request conveyed in your letter of 11 June.

It is noteworthy that the report clearly strengthens the case for a meaningful reform of the Council. It states that “there continues to be a common understanding that the Security Council in its current composition does not reflect international reality and thus needs to be adequately rebalanced.” As importantly, the report affirms that “status quo is judged as unrealistic”. In addition, it asserts that the expansion of the Council is “important to the wide membership of the Organization”. Albeit not new, these findings are relevant for they reveal a continued, deep-running demand for Security Council reform.

Consistently with widespread support for reform, the report also identified an equally strong political will to translate the demand for reform into actual change. This becomes evident in the observation that “all delegations expressed their disposition to enter intergovernmental negotiations”.

Therefore, the state of play is quite clear: we all want a reformed Council and we are all prepared to engage in the negotiations needed to achieve such goal.

It is in the light of this fundamental political assessment made by the four vice-chairpersons that Brazil reads the report. More importantly, it is on the basis of such assessment that we can all expect real commitment of all delegations with Security Council reform.

Mr. President,

The report touches on some important specific points.

On the framework for the negotiations, the report states that "it is understood that any decision on Security Council reform should be taken by the General Assembly". Additionally, in recalling the sovereignty of the Assembly, it mentions that at "some point in time consideration of the reform process may be shifted to the GA plenary". We fully share this view and believe that the time is now. As we have said earlier, the OEWG has played an important role in clarifying positions and allowing for extensive debate. This has already taken fifteen years. We must now move into a result-oriented phase. The experience at the U.N. indicates that the forum for negotiations is the plenary of the General Assembly. Examples can be found in the recent reforms that led to the establishment of the Council on Human Rights and the Peacebuilding Commission.

The report also identifies the negotiables, namely categories of membership; the question of the veto; the question of regional representation; the size of an enlarged Council, and the working methods of the Security Council. This allows us to move to the next phase and actually start the negotiations.

And this, Mr. President, is the single most important point I wish to make. Decision 61/561, adopted by consensus last September, gives a simple, clear-cut mandate: to conduct intergovernmental negotiations. The fact that nine months have elapsed and we have not done so is the immediate cause of the frustration that the report correctly identifies in the present stage of our work. We cannot further delay launching the negotiating process and add to widespread frustration.

The substantive basis for such negotiation was also established by the General Assembly September last: "the progress achieved so far, particularly at the sixty-first session, as well as the positions and proposals made by Member States". The report captures the essence of proposals in section III (a) and in the Annex. The identification of five specific options for size of an expanded Council and the categories of membership is an important contribution to the negotiations. The Annex may serve as a valid starting point of the negotiating process, provided it is amended to include all the negotiables and the correct reference is made to permanent members and not permanent seats, in accordance with the Charter.

We fully concur with the view expressed in the report that we all have to seek agreement and, therefore, must be ready to compromise. For this to happen, we need to start a negotiating process without pre-conditions where all parties can defend their proposals. The process would thus establish a political dynamics where compromises may take place and an agreed solution be reached, in accordance with the Charter. Here sequencing is key. Negotiations may lead to compromise and not the opposite. Compromise is expected as the outcome of the negotiation and not as the starting point. It is for the negotiation to reveal what is feasible to agree on.

In Brazil's case, as we have said time and again, we favour an expansion of the Council in both categories and will pursue such goal in the course of negotiations. The notion in the report that "Member States agree on a number of issues" should not be misconstrued as to indicate that there is agreement to limit the reform to those few issues. The key point here is that the demand for change is not a demand for any change, but for a meaningful one, that ensures a more legitimate, representative and effective Security Council, better attuned to present-day political realities.

Mr. President,

In concluding, I wish to reiterate the thrust of my intervention: it is time to launch negotiations. The political will of Member States has been clearly reiterated to your vice-chairpersons. Sufficient light has been shed on the procedural and substantive elements of the negotiations. After many years of consultations, the setting is ready. We count on your leadership to help us make the 62nd session of the GA a historic one.

Thank you.