



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

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Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Related Matters

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Mr. President,

1. Let me first thank you for convening this meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Related Matters. The Republic of Korea commends and supports your leadership, Mr. President, as well as the efforts of the Task Force to move the process of Security Council reform forward.
2. My delegation highly appreciates the report of the Task Force before us. The report generally outlines the current situation and endeavours to suggest a way forward on this critical issue. We also appreciate the serious efforts by the Task Force to build upon the progress made so far, particularly at the 61st session of the General Assembly. In our view, the report offers substantial food for thought on a way forward, if it is read in close tandem with the previous two reports of the Facilitators submitted in the last General Assembly session. It is in this regard that my delegation believes the timeline perspective in this report should be carefully considered so as to bridge the progress made so far and the future progress.

Mr. President,

3. Although some chapters of the report call for further contemplation and consultations with other Member States, we would like to offer some comments on the report. First of all, we fully share the

observation of the Task Force that “Member States seem to agree Security Council expansion should contemplate additional non-permanent seats.” Indeed, this is a fair and balanced observation, and it is for this very reason that my delegation, along with other UfC countries, has stressed that the Security Council should be reformed through an expansion of non-permanent seats.

4. We believe that Security Council reform is worthwhile only if it is in line with the principles of transparency, efficiency, accountability, and representativeness. From this perspective, the Republic of Korea has consistently upheld the position that the best way to reform the Security Council is through an increase in non-permanent, elected seats. To guarantee accountability, in particular, elections are indispensable — and not just a single election that entitles the winners to remain in office permanently, but recurring, periodic elections which provide Member States the opportunity to review the performance of the Council members and respond accordingly. Without this guaranteed accountability, the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council would also be undermined. For these reasons, we are opposed to the addition of new permanent members to the Security Council and welcome the observation of the Task Force report, properly reflecting the general feelings widely shared by the Membership.

Mr. President,

5. It is in this vein that my delegation notes with confusion the annex attached to the report because it is grossly inconsistent with the main part of the report. Let me offer some examples. First, despite the aforementioned observation that Member States support Security Council expansion through additional non-permanent seats, the annex proposes expansion of extended and permanent seats as major options for the category of seats. Non-permanent seats would be increased on the where-available basis, to the particular detriment of the interest of small states. Second, the report defines the category of the seats as the main source of disagreement, but the annex proposes options based on category and size of the expanded Council. Third, while “a timeline perspective” makes it clear that no preferred position would be excluded a priori, the position of UfC supporting an increase of 2-year re-electable non-permanent seats as one of the four options is completely excluded a priori.
6. Furthermore, some conspicuous omissions from the annex cannot go unheeded by my delegation. For instance, the issue of regional representation, to which a significant number of Member States like the African Group and UfC attach great importance, is not addressed in the annex or elsewhere in the report. Therefore, Mr. President, it seems that we need further in-depth consultations in order to come up with a full, complete, and acceptable list of negotiables that can serve as a basis of future negotiations.

7. Turning now to the procedural matters, we share the view of the Task Force that the seven principles, proposed by you and widely accepted by the Membership, should serve as valuable guidelines to push this process forward.
8. In our firm view, as you highlighted in the seven principles and supported by the African Group, UfC and others, the Open-ended Working Group should carry out consultations and reach an agreement on the framework and modalities before we move on to the negotiations. For any negotiations to be successful, it is imperative that a prior agreement should first be reached on the framework and modalities for such negotiations. This will enable us to move into the negotiating process by eliminating any potential misunderstanding and confusion over the future process and to form a common understanding on how the negotiations will be conducted.
9. In addition, Security Council reform is an ongoing process and agreement should be reached at each stage, before we move on to the next, on the basis of consensus. This principle is also supported by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)'s resolution 11/11-P (IS), adopted in March 2008, which stresses that any decision on Security Council reform should be made by consensus.
10. Most importantly, the Open-ended Working Group should continue to serve as the sole legitimate venue to conduct consultations and negotiations on Security Council reform. This authority, as the Task Force aptly points out, was conferred by the General Assembly and continues to be respected by most of the Membership. Some argue that nothing can be achieved within the framework of the Working Group. However, we believe that it is unfair to blame the lack of progress on the Working Group. Rather, it is a lack of political will on the part of the Member States to achieve compromise that is most responsible.
11. In this context, my delegation wants to express its deep concern at the recent move for a unilateral action, initiated by some Member States, which we fear would erode trust by causing division and confrontation among the membership. As you have continually stressed, Member States should refrain from steps that may undermine the current momentum and consensus, and there should be no unilateral proposal or initiative. This is a prerequisite for any negotiations because it is directly linked to the question of mutual trust among the participants of the negotiations. We are particularly disappointed by this move because it has been launched while you and the Task Force are exerting the utmost to carry the process forward.

Mr. President,

12. As you are well aware, the Uniting for Consensus suggested a framework for further consultations and negotiations in its letter addressed to you on March 5th, 2008. My delegation believes that this is a

simple, yet clear and effective way forward that merits serious consideration by the Membership. We proposed to reach agreement on an intermediate solution on the basis of the variations outlined in the Report of the five facilitators at the previous General Assembly Session. To that end, we suggested as modality transparent and open consultations and intergovernmental negotiations within this Working Group, free of unilateral initiatives. As the next steps, we first proposed an agreement on the framework for further consultations and intergovernmental negotiations and moved on to identify 'negotiables,' and then elaborated a paper to serve as a basis for negotiations. We call on the Member States, through you, to positively consider this practical proposal.

In conclusion, Mr. President,

13. The Republic of Korea has consistently supported Security Council reform. I hope that this meeting can foster constructive and fruitful consultations that will lead to achievable and comprehensive reform. We will continue to work closely with all Member States and groups in the coming months during this session of the General Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. President.