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(Check against delivery)

Statement by
Ambassador Gert Rosenthal
Permanent Representative of Guatemala
Informal plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. facilitator:

I thank you for giving me the floor and above all for the enlightening letter of 2 March. The most controversial issue on the question of the Security Council reform has been selected to be the first one we discuss in this first round of consultations. It is without a doubt the issue that divides the membership the most, since almost all the countries here represented would agree on the need to increase the membership of the Security Council but stand divided if such an expansion would be in both categories or only in one.

The position of Guatemala on this question has evolved in the past years in order to achieve the bigger objective of reform, which seems to us more urgent as the years go by. At the beginning we firmly supported the notion of not accepting the expansion on the category of permanent members, for the same reasons -- valid, from a conceptual point of view -- that have been expressed against this privilege considered by some as undemocratic. Nevertheless, due to the paralysis that this issue brought to our discussion on the reform of the Council, fundamental organ of the UN, with the time we came to accept to expansion in both categories, with the caveat that such solution garnered the consensus of the membership. That is to say, our main concern has always been to adapt the Council to the new realities of the world, since the least it reflects those realities, less influence will have in the real world, and that is harmful for the Security Council and harmful for the United Nations.

In other words, the imperative is achieving the reform versus the option of allowing the inertia to take over. This last option has an increasing cost and that is precisely why we became one of the many members of the General Assembly willing to take a flexible stand.

It is because of these, that my delegation can live with an expansion of the Security Council on both categories, and almost by definition also could accept any of the formulations that have been presented around the so called “intermediate category”. While recognizing that this concept needs more definition as it means different things for different delegations, we consider it as a way to pave the road to a possible middle ground among opposing approaches.

I don’t need to dwell on this point, except as it can be considered a third category of members, something between permanent and non permanent members, or can be a transitional approach that after a prudent trial period and with the passing of the years, facilitates a definitive solution to this question that has defied our coming together.

Mr. Facilitator:

Our delegation is ready to examine any of the option on the table. The clearest one is the one that has paralyzed our action up to now: the possibility of expansion in both categories of membership. But if we follow the road of the intermediary approach, we will need to better understand its implications. We will support you in this endeavor.

I thank you

New York, 4 March 2009