

# 1 SEPTEMBER 2009 - GENERAL ASSEMBLY : SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM - STATEMENT BY MR. GÉRARD ARAUD, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**Intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council Reform  
Debate on the five key issues**

*(translated from statement made in French)*

Dear Mr. President,

The French delegation would like to thank you for organizing this new meeting for our negotiations on Security Council reform in accordance with your proposal and your letter of August 12, 2009.

As we reach the third stage of our negotiations, I would like to reaffirm our unfailing commitment in support of the reform of the governance of the international institutions and the Security Council in particular. This reform is essential in order for the institutions to be better able to meet the challenges of international security and respond to the economic crisis and under-development.

On August 26, the President of the Republic stated firmly that "our world needs the United Nations but in order for it to retain its universal legitimacy the United Nations must not be afraid to carry out Security Council reform, even if is only on a temporary basis".

With this in mind and since you have invited us here I would like to make our position clear on the five issues retained within the framework of the decision adopted by the General Assembly on September 15, 2008.

I would like to take advantage of today's meeting to highlight the points that we consider to be important.

1. The Security Council and the General Assembly must continue to exercise their powers in line with the provisions of the Charter, which, from our point of view, do not need to be changed with regard to this issue.

At the same time, we support the most effective application of the relevant provisions of the Charter relating to the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

I would also like, once again, to emphasize that France has always been anxious to ensure that the working methods of the Security Council allow it to operate effectively, which is fundamental for its credibility as the main peacekeeping and security organ, but also allow it to maintain a transparent and interactive relationship with all of the United Nations Member States.

Significant progress has already been achieved in this respect.

Opportunities for public meetings at the Security Council have expanded, with policy debates being held, allowing the views of the States that are interested, for different reasons, in a particular issue to be heard, as well as the organization of open debates between the members of the Security Council on issues that do not need to be dealt with in private. Experience shows that these issues account for the majority of the cases.

The Council has continued to make regular improvements to its methods and procedures in this spirit of openness.

We also support the recent initiatives to improve coherence between the actions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. Allow me to quote, as an example, the establishment, and promising activities, of the Peacebuilding Commission which has demonstrated that two organs can work in synergy together.

As such, we would like to see continued improvement in the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly in order to achieve improved overall transparency and coherence.

In addition, exercising the right to veto is a significant responsibility for a Permanent Member of the Security Council as it relates to the maintenance of international peace and security. We are aware of the particular responsibility of the United Nations Security Council with regard to situations relating to war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and serious and persistent violations of human rights.

I would like to remind you that France has only issued a veto 18 times since 1945; we last used the right of veto almost 20 years ago in December 1989. The last time we used a lone veto was in 1976.

The right of veto issue must not be allowed to block the necessary reform of the Security Council.

2. The issue relating to the composition of the Security Council is clearly central to its reform.

Security Council Reform must be carried out for both categories of members: permanent and non-permanent.

It must take into account the emergence of new powers that possess the willingness to assume the responsibility of a permanent seat in the Security Council and that are, in line with the United Nations Charter, able to make a significant contribution to the Council's actions in the maintenance of international peace and security.

In this respect, we support the accession of Germany, Brazil, India and Japan to permanent member status. We also support an increased presence of African countries within the Security Council, in particular among its permanent members. There is also the question of the presence of an Arab State as part of the permanent members of the Security Council.

At the same time, the expansion of the Security Council should not be carried out to the detriment of the effectiveness of its actions and its credibility. The Security Council must therefore be kept to a reasonable size.

3. In order to break the current deadlock and to be more certain of achieving Security Council reform, we support the option of an intermediate reform, as proposed by the French president and the British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, on March 27, 2008 and again on July 6, 2009.

Such a solution would make possible to test the parameters of a Security Council reform during an intermediate phase.

We believe that the intermediate solution should be examined during the 64th session of the General Assembly during which we hope to make significant progress. We will review it during our meeting on September 3.

We must all demonstrate flexibility. You can rely on our commitment and our determination to work towards this goal.

Mr. President, I am counting on you to take the points I have just highlighted into consideration so that, together, we can move forward quickly in our negotiations.

Thank you