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UN REFORM UPDATE

Member States Discuss Next Steps for Security Council Reform

19 July 2007

*On 19 July 2007, Member States met for an informal meeting of 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.”**

Chaired by the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, the day-long meeting mainly focused on **how to move the reform process towards actual intergovernmental negotiations on a framework for further discussions.**

The deliberations took place on the basis of the [Report of the Five Facilitators](#), issued in mid-April 2007, and on the [report of Ambassador Christian Wenaweser of Liechtenstein and Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz of Chile](#), issued in early July 2007. In sum, the latest report suggested that, as the positions of the major interest groups are not likely to be fully realized in the short run, Member States should consider a transitional/intermediary approach to move the process forward. A transitional arrangement would entail the creation of a category of membership not currently provided for by the Charter.

In her opening remarks, the [President of the General Assembly, H. E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa](#) stressed the importance of strong ownership by the Membership of any future process, and urged all interest groups to show a willingness to begin a dialogue on how to enter in intergovernmental negotiations: “Only then would we need clarity on what kind of document such negotiations could be based upon.”

While once more stating their support for the proposals of the Group of Four (G4), [Germany](#) declared their full support of the process as recommended by the President of the GA: **The next step must be a direct negotiation process, with an aim for a result in the 62nd Assembly.** For Germany, an intermediary process, as recommended by the facilitators, would be an attractive short-term solution; however, only if such a process would maintain options for future comprehensive reform steps, with a mandatory review as an integral part. Finally, Germany urged the President of the GA to set up a group of Member States who could organize the negotiation process and perhaps even draft a concrete proposal that could act as a point of departure for further deliberations.

France reaffirmed its commitment to the German bid for a permanent seat in the Council, while Spain added its support for an intermediate approach.

Japan declared its full support of the proposals of the G4, while at the same time lamenting the fact that the reports from the different facilitators seemed to omit the clear indications of the substantial consensus within the membership towards approving an enlargement in both categories of membership: permanent and non-permanent.

Australia, in turn, stated their support of the Japanese bid for a permanent seat; while highlighting the possibility of advancing along two parallel tracks: An intermediary arrangement, and an African Group - G4 solution.

The [Netherlands](#) voiced their support of a transitional approach in which no Member State has to give up its original position. This approach could start with the ‘feasible’ and aim for ‘the higher’ at a later comprehensive review. Thus, the next step should be intergovernmental negotiations, preferably aiming for a result within the next session of the General Assembly. A viewpoint fully shared by the Swiss delegation. However, [Switzerland](#) went a step further in criticizing the current lack of transparency in the Security Council. In their perspective, improvements in the working methods should not fall victim to the difficulties facing the enlargement. Council enlargement and working methods could be pursued along different tracks.

Speaking on behalf of the African Group, [Uganda](#), restated the African claim for two permanent seats with all the privileges, including the right of Veto and five non-permanent seats (the so-called Ezulwini Consensus). Commenting directly on the reform process, the representative bemoaned that from their perspective, only Africa had to make concessions, while other groups could maintain their positions. As such, Uganda urged all interest groups to show flexibility, while requesting more clarity on the process to come.

South Africa stated its full support of the African Group, as well as a transitional/intermediary approach, but added "...that it should not be seen as an end in itself, but rather as one contribution in moving the process forward towards the comprehensive reform of the Security Council."

Egypt affirmed its commitment to the Ezulwini Consensus. For the Egyptians it was still a goal to grant any new permanent members of the Council with the right of veto; however, they also reiterated their support of a middle track. In their view, a deadline and the goals of an interim process must be agreed upon as soon as possible and before any process can begin.

While supporting the proposals of the African Group as well as the Uniting for Consensus, [Pakistan](#) once again stated their principled opposition to "...any proposals that directly, or in disguise, seek to create new permanent members. Pakistan pronounced itself ready to explore an agreement based on an intermediate approach as presented by the Facilitators; however, the Pakistani delegate underscored the importance of a general agreement on a framework of negotiations to carry the process forward, with the Report of the Five Facilitators together with the complementary report of the two facilitators as a basis.

China noted its support of the proposals of the African Group, while underscoring the importance of keeping all options open and not being limited to only the proposals contained in the report of the Five Facilitators.

In the [Brazilian statement](#), the permanent representative remarked that reform must address increased representation in both permanent and non-permanent categories, while taking into special account the representation of the developing world. Furthermore, to move the process forward it would be necessary to establish a format for negotiation, set up a timetable as well as a deadline for the conclusion of the negotiation process.

Argentina commented that in their view there should not be a new category of membership in the Security Council.

Mexico favored an implementation of new members of the Council in the permanent category, as well as an intermediary approach.

India noted that they will show flexibility when a more detailed proposal is on the table. The Membership should now move to a text. Perhaps an actual straw poll could identify the biggest hurdles ahead. The Indian delegate also reiterated their support of the Swiss proposal to enhance the working methods of the Council. Thinking aloud the Indians furthermore wondered how a system of checks and balances could be introduced into the Security Council.

Finally, the United States highlighted their support for the addition of new permanent seats: but also underscored, however, that Member States in question should have a demonstrated responsible foreign policy.

Statements made available by Member States:

- [Brazil Statement on Security Council Reform](#), 19 July 2007
- [Cuba Statement on Security Council Reform](#), 19 July 2007
- [Germany Statement on Security Council Reform](#), 19 July 2007
- [Mauritius Statement on Security Council Reform](#), 19 July 2007
- [Netherlands Statement on Security Council Reform](#), 19 July 2007
- [Pakistan Statement on Security Council Reform](#), 19 July 2007
- [President of the General Assembly Statement on Security Council Reform](#), 19 July 2007
- [Singapore Statement on Security Council Reform](#), 19 July 2007
- [Switzerland Statement on Security Council Reform](#), 19 July 2007
- [Uganda Statement on Security Council Reform](#), 19 July 2007

**This update is meant to be a summary of some of the main ideas discussed during the meetings and does not represent a complete and official account of all positions expressed by Member States.*