

## **Statement by**

**Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin  
Permanent Representative**

**At**

**An informal meeting of the Plenary on the  
Intergovernmental negotiations on the question of  
equitable representation on and increase in the  
membership of the Security Council and other matters  
related to the Council**

**United Nations General Assembly**

25 February 2019

**Co-Chairs,**

Thank you for organizing this meeting. I align myself with the statements delivered by the Representative of St. Vincent and Grenadines, on behalf of the L 69, and the Representative of Japan, on behalf of the G 4. I would like to make few additional points in my national capacity.

2. We were pleased to see the commitment delegations and groups have demonstrated to implementing last year's decision 72/557, which refers to all previous decisions, including inter-alia, 62/557.

3. In accordance with last year's decision, we will, while responding to the areas that you want to focus on today, i.e., - categories of membership, regional representation and veto – make suggestions to build on the Revised Elements of Commonality and Issues for Further Consideration paper, circulated on 14 June 2018, as well as the positions and proposals of member states, as reflected in the text and its annex circulated on 31 July 2015.

4. In our view, this would help in further harmonizing our work in this session with the outcome of last year. As the wise say , “harmonisation makes small things grow, lack of it makes great things decay”. The IGN, of course full of the wise.

5. Having worked on harmonizing the work of the 70th and 71st sessions, we could harmonize the work of the 69th session with the work of the 72nd session in this, the 73rd session. By doing so, we can thereby ensure that all elements that remain to be reflected from previous documents into the document of 14 June 2018 can be done during this session.

**Co-Chairs,**

6. In accordance with this line of thinking, it is important to start capturing the sum and substance of the positions and proposals of member states reflected in the Framework text, and its annex circulated on 31 July 2015, into our outcome this year. This will add value to the Revised Elements of Commonality and Issues for Further Consideration paper, circulated on 14 June 2018.

7. For example, on the issue of “Categories of Membership”, a total of 113 Member States, out of 122 who submitted their positions in the Framework Document, support expansion in both of the existing categories specified in the Charter. In short, more than 90% of the written submissions in the document are in favour of expansion in both categories of membership specified in the Charter. These are listed in paras a.1.1 II, III & IV of the letter dated 31 July 2015, contained in GA document 69/560.

8. If we also include Member States whose positions are reflected in the annex to the Framework Document, then 129 out of 152 Member-States, who either submitted their positions in the Framework text or sent letters which were annexed and circulated by the President of the 69th General Assembly with his letter of 31 July 2015, support expansion in both categories. In other words, around 85 % of total submissions, included either in the text or annex, are for expansion in both categories. We have heard many refer to the need for respect for democratic expressions. Will those who are speaking of democracy be ready to accept this democratic expression listed in a GA document

**Co-Chairs,**

9. We request you to kindly ascertain the veracity of this orientation of the significant majority of Member States, as reflected in the document of 31 July 2015, on the issue relating to “Categories of Membership”. This data is readily available in GA document 69/560 and only needs to be captured adequately. Reflecting such factual orientation in any outcome of this year is a concrete way of implementing decision 72/557.

10. Similarly, on the issue of Regional Representation, we note that the majority of Member States have called in their submissions for equitable geographical representation and need for addressing the non-representation and under-representation of some regions in the permanent and non-permanent category. For example, in the Asia-Pacific group, there are 52 states vying for 2 non-permanent seats, while in the WEOG group there are 25 members in the pool vying for 2 seats. Therefore, for 1 seat, 26 Asia-Pacific States are in the race, while only less than half that number of West European & Other Group states vie for a similar seat. Put another way, there are more than 3 billion of “we the people” from Asia-Pacific seeking representation through 2 seats with a 2-year term, while “people” from no other region face such daunting challenges in seeking to be represented equitably.

**Co-Chairs,**

11. Africa has a unique and holistic approach towards international peace and security. This common approach on matters of peace and security, which has no parallel in any other regional group, has evolved over many years. All of Africa has also coalesced on a region-wide Common African Position on the issue of Security Council Reform. India, for its part would like to reiterate its support for representation of Africa in the Council in both categories and supports the Common African position, as stated in the paragraph b.5. of the Framework Document of 31 July 2015. We urge that this Common African Position be reflected in any revised document that we come up with on the basis of today’s discussion.

12. We also support further consideration of cross-regional representation arrangements to ensure that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) find adequate avenues for representation in a reformed Council.

13. Also, as we approach the issue of regional representation, we have a convergence that we need to adequately reflect. As the L 69 has pointed out, all of us agree that any expansion in numbers is to be apportioned amongst the five regional groups. We would, therefore, submit that this is a commonality that can be appropriately reflected under this rubric.

**Co-Chairs,**

14. While we refine and add new issues for further consideration, we must keep track of all proposals of equitable geographical distribution. Otherwise, we will lose track of who has proposed which proposal. For example, the reference to expansion in 2-year non-permanent category, as mentioned in the Issues for Further Consideration section of 'categories of membership'. We have not heard of any group of countries having asked for only expansion of 2 year-non-permanent

category, as currently configured. Also, no numerical model linked to such expansion has been articulated by any group in the discussions during the 72nd session or this year.

15. It is to avoid such confusion and to maintain the integrity of positions, the requirement for attribution of positions was articulated vociferously. The 3 key elements under discussion today should be reflected in a manner that the provenance of proposals is understood. With turnover of diplomats being what it is, we shouldn't be in a position where the co-chairs of sessions, after this, wonder why did the previous co-chairs add something, without a trail of the discussions being recorded.

### **Co-Chairs,**

16. The issue of the veto is a complex one. A quick review of the record of the use of veto is indicative of why many States approach the veto the way they do today.

- Since the creation of the Security Council in 1946 till today, at least 238 vetoes were cast.

- As many as 59 vetoes were to block applications for membership to the UN. Vietnam's application was vetoed 9 times; Italy's 6 times; Japan, Sri Lanka, Portugal, Ireland, Republic of Korea and Jordan 4 times; Austria and Finland 3 times; and Nepal, Libya, Laos and Cambodia 2 times; and Angola, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Mauritania, Mongolia and Spain 1 time each. These Member States are now widely regarded as significant participants in maintaining international peace and security rather than threats to international peace and security, as was perceived when their initial applications for membership were vetoed.

- No less than 18 vetoes were cast to block resolutions against the apartheid regime in South Africa, and then in Southern Rhodesia, and 22 vetoes have been cast on Middle East issue, including Palestine, and more than a dozen on matters relating to Namibia.

17. Given the history of such use of the veto, a number of Member States have called for abolition of the veto. The names and suggestions calling for abolition of the veto or, if this is deemed not possible, limiting or curtailing its use to the extent possible, are part of the document of 31 July 2015 in paragraphs d.30 to d.33. Also, a number of Member States support voluntary restrictions on the use of veto in situations such as genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and gross human rights violations. Again, these are listed in as many as 12 paragraphs - d.12 to d.14 and d.16 to d.24.

18. In addition, the use of the veto has been extended to the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council, e.g., the Sanctions Committees. In these bodies, the veto has been extended to all 15 members of the Committees. Any member can block or object or place on hold, any request of a Member State, thereby in effect killing the proposal on grounds that unanimity is required. By a procedural stratagem, veto has been expanded to all members of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council, rather than being subject to restraints. In fact, some seem to think they can veto discussions here too, even in the level playing field of the General Assembly.

19. In short, the issue of veto is complex, complicated and contentious, but then we cannot also allow the veto to have a veto over the process of Council reform itself.

**Co-Chairs,**

20. Before I conclude, I also thank you for laying out the timeline for this session's work. We hope that we will have the time necessary to do our work satisfactorily. Having said that, it would be remiss of me not to mention that in no session, in the last 4 years, have we ever finished our work in May, a full 4 months before the end of the UNGA session. I, therefore, like others, suggest that rather than opting of an approach of guillotining discussions, we keep ourselves open to providing opportunities for completion of discussions, should the time envisaged not be sufficient on account of the interesting and important points of view that Member States may want to bring to the table, going forward.

**Thank you, Co-Chairs.**