



General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

35th plenary meeting

Tuesday, 26 November 2019, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Muhammad-Bande (Nigeria)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Buttigieg (Malta), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 122 (continued)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council

Mrs. Namgyel (Bhutan): At the outset, the delegation of Bhutan wishes to thank the President for convening this important meeting on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on behalf of the L.69 group (see A/74/PV.33). Please allow me to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

I take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to Her Excellency Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, for her leadership, as well as to the two co-Chairs, Ambassador Christian Braun of Luxembourg and Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates, for their contribution and hard work in steering the work of the intergovernmental negotiations process during the seventy-third session. Bhutan looks forward to the appointment of the new co-Chairs for the twelfth session of the intergovernmental

negotiations, to whom we will continue to extend our full cooperation. It is our conviction that building on the outcomes of the previous sessions, rather than starting from scratch, would strengthen the credibility of the process.

We need yet again this year to deliberate on this important issue. We have debated on this matter for more than 25 years. Unfortunately, meaningful progress has eluded us due to a strong divergence of views on how to achieve the reform. As we embark upon the next phase of the intergovernmental negotiations, we are hopeful of seeing tangible progress; otherwise, the legitimacy of the process will be at stake. During the high-level week of the current session of the General Assembly in September, a majority of heads of delegations, in their addresses to the General Assembly as well as another forums, underscored the need to strengthen multilateralism. My delegation considers that the reform of the Security Council is an integral part of strengthening multilateralism, and it is imperative in that context.

Bhutan, like many other Member States, believes that reform and the expansion of the Security Council are necessary for the Council's continued legitimacy, effective decision-making and greater accountability to the general membership. Every institution must adapt and evolve to stay relevant and fit for purpose to address the multifaceted challenges of the twenty-first century. My delegation reiterates its position in support of equitable geographical representation to ensure adequate representation of underrepresented or unrepresented regions. At present, entire continents and

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

19-38506 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



regions have no representation or are underrepresented in the Security Council.

Bhutan also supports the expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. Bhutan believes that the membership of the Security Council should come from both developing and developed countries, including small island developing States and small States. Every country, regardless of size or might, must be given an opportunity to serve in the reformed Council, as small States make up about 20 per cent of the United Nations membership. Small States also bring an important and unique perspective on a variety of issues that are considered at the General Assembly. Bhutan supports the aspirations of the Group of Four to serve as permanent members of an expanded Security Council, with Africa also appropriately represented.

As all are aware, despite many years of deliberations on the reform of the Security Council, there are no tangible results, not because of a lack of views and proposals but because of the absence of a negotiation text. It is therefore now imperative to take a logical step and commence real negotiations on the basis of a text, like all other intergovernmental negotiations processes at United Nations, as articulated by the vast majority of Member States in their statements.

The delegation of Bhutan is hopeful that this round of intergovernmental negotiations will engender meaningful progress in an open, inclusive and transparent manner under the President of the General Assembly's able leadership. To that end, we look forward to engaging constructively with all delegations.

Ms. Kalamwina (Zambia): At the outset, I wish to thank the President for organizing this important meeting on agenda item 122, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council". I wish to further thank the previous co-Chairs, Ambassador Christian Braun and Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh, Permanent Representatives of Luxembourg and the United Arab Emirates, respectively, for the way that they handled the previous intergovernmental negotiations process.

My delegation also wishes to align itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of African States by Ambassador Alie Kabba, Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone (see A/74/PV.33). I make the following statement in my national capacity.

Zambia remains committed to the comprehensive reform of the Security Council. Council reform is an integral part of our broader efforts to transform the United Nations into a more effective, democratic and global institution. To that effect, Zambia reaffirms its commitment to the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, which outline the African Common Position on Security Council reform — that Africa demands no fewer than two permanent seats, with all the rights and privileges of the current permanent members, and also an additional two non-permanent seats.

We have clocked more than 70 years since the Security Council was established to assume its primary role in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is important to note that the world has undergone several profound changes. That therefore means that the Organization must adapt to the new realities, as expected, for our world to become broadly represented and more efficient, as well as to bring about more transparency in order to enhance its legitimacy, as expected from our people.

As noticed from the previous interactions on the reform of the Security Council, the meetings were characterized by a number of divergent views on the fundamental aspects on the reform process. That is an indication that the process requires more consultations, until all outstanding matters have been jointly resolved. In that respect, my delegation does not presently support the calls for text-based negotiations, until broad consensus is reached among Member States.

It is my hope that today's meeting and other subsequent meetings will afford Member States an opportunity to fully consult and also understand the positions and views of Member States and other groupings.

Mr. Flynn (Ireland): At the outset, I would like to join others in expressing particular thanks to Ambassadors Nusseibeh and Braun for their exemplary leadership over the past year on this difficult but important process.

The requirement for Security Council reform grows ever-more pressing. As we and others have repeatedly stated, the Council no longer adequately represents the composition of the United Nations. The longer that this unacceptable situation persists, the greater the threat to the legitimacy of the Council and its unique and vital role in maintaining international peace and security. The intergovernmental negotiations process is

not perfect; progress has been painfully slow at times. All of us who are committed to reform must make that process work better. Ireland looks forward to fully supporting the incoming co-Chairs in that regard.

On substance, the primary task of the intergovernmental negotiations process must be to address the historic underrepresentation on the Council of countries from Africa. There needs to be urgent reform that will ensure a fair and equitable African say in Council decisions — something that would benefit other Council members too as they deal with the Council agenda and its heavy focus on Africa. In addition to rectifying African underrepresentation, we also need to ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable are heard. That means small island developing States, for example, must be able to play a role on the Council that reflects the seriousness of the situations that they face. Smaller States, which make up the majority of the United Nations membership, must have their right to serve on the Council protected. The essence of the United Nations and of multilateralism is laws and structures that provide equal protection, respect and guarantees to the large and small and promote the mutual benefits in addressing common challenges within shared frameworks.

In addition to the issue of composition, Security Council reform should also make the Council more accountable, democratic and transparent. For example, elected members must play a fully equal role on the Council, including having the responsibility of drafting Council products and shaping all Council decisions. We also favour greater interaction between the Council and the General Assembly on the work of important bodies such as the Peacebuilding Commission, which are well placed to address the multifaceted challenges faced by countries experiencing conflict.

Ireland is also a strong supporter of transparency and welcomes all efforts to make the Council's work more accessible to the public and wider membership.

We believe that the veto is a responsibility, not a right. It has been frequently misused, and we favour its eventual abolition. In the meantime, we support the French-Mexican and the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's initiatives to prevent its use in cases of mass atrocity crimes. The veto is a critical question for the intergovernmental negotiations to address.

Ireland has repeatedly argued that Council reform is urgent. For that to occur, we need an early move to text-based negotiations. We do not believe that this is in any way in conflict with the member-driven approach that has been pursued to date. We strongly support building on the outcomes of the recent intergovernmental negotiations processes, including the framework document and its annexes and the elements of convergence and commonality prepared by successive Chairs. We want to see a successful outcome in negotiations, and we are willing to support any model capable of commanding sufficient consensus. Sticking rigidly to positions for 20 years has not achieved success. We therefore appeal to all countries that support reform to consider how such change can be achieved.

Ireland aspires to membership of the Security Council in the period 2021 to 2022. We are critical of the Security Council's composition and functioning because we want to see it fully able to deal with the urgent tasks that it faces. At a time when multilateralism itself is facing stiff challenges, there is an extra responsibility on States that strongly value the United Nations to examine how they can contribute to that important reform. We will do our utmost to help achieve that.

Mrs. Nyagura (Zimbabwe): I thank the President for convening this important meeting focused on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council. I wish to pledge Zimbabwe's support and commitment to work with other delegations in moving the intergovernmental negotiations forward in accordance with decision 62/557. Like other delegations that have spoken before us, we hope that the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations will be appointed soon to enable us to proceed with the work that lies ahead of us.

At the outset, my delegation would like to align itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/74/PV.33).

Zimbabwe, like many Member States, is convinced that only through a comprehensive reform process can we transform the Security Council into a more representative, transparent, efficient, effective and accountable organ. That would no doubt promote the values and principles of the Charter of the United

Nations for a just world based on universality, equity and regional balance and reflect the realities of the contemporary world.

Africa's position on the reform of the Security Council, as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and affirmed in the Sirte Declaration, outlines that the continent should have no fewer than two permanent seats on the Security Council, with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right to veto, as well as five additional non-permanent seats.

The African region maintains that meaningful reform can be achieved only through the expansion of the membership of the Security Council with an additional eleven seats, from the current 15 to a total of 26. That, we believe, will address the structural imbalance in the Security Council, which is currently dominated by the permanent members, who use the veto selectively to further their narrow political agendas. That is why Africa is calling for the abolition of the veto. We firmly believe that, for as long as it exists, the veto should be extended to all permanent members of the Security Council without distinction. Without that, the reform risks creating a third category of membership — permanent members without veto power — thereby perpetuating injustice.

It is heartening to note that the need for Africa to be represented in the Security Council now enjoys broad support from Member States across all regions. The Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries held in October expressed support for increased and enhanced representation for Africa in a reformed Security Council. They further supported the African Common Position as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. We urge all progressive Member States to join those that have categorically pronounced themselves in support of Africa to lend support to our call to have this travesty of justice redressed.

While it is important that we give impetus to the reform process, we are also mindful of the fact that the outcome should be allowed space to garner the broadest possible political consensus, critical in taking us forward as a collective so that we have an outcome that we can all embrace. Zimbabwe therefore believes that it is premature to proceed to text-based negotiations. Rather, at this stage we should focus on narrowing down the divergent views that still characterize our discourse.

Zimbabwe looks forward to continued dialogue with the aim of making meaningful progress in the reform process.

Mr. Amayo (Kenya): Let me begin by joining colleagues in thanking the President for convening today's important debate. Kenya assures him of our support in the upcoming session of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform.

Kenya aligns itself with the statement read out by the representative of Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of African States (see A.74.PV.33).

My delegation's position on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council has been unwavering in support of the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. Kenya believes that the African Common Position is the best option to ensure equity in representation at the Security Council. The Ezulwini Consensus calls for the expansion of the Security Council in both categories — permanent and non-permanent membership — with no fewer than two permanent seats and two additional non-permanent seats, with an increase to no fewer than 26 members in total. It also asks that the new members of the Council have, in principle, the same responsibilities and obligations as the current members, including the veto power.

Africa is the largest region in terms of United Nations membership, with the bulk of the agenda in the Security Council being on Africa. As such, any reform of the Security Council should ensure Africa's legitimate right to a fair and equitable geographical representation in the Council.

The five key reform issues of decision 62/557 remain the guiding principles of our work in the intergovernmental negotiations. While divergent opinions remain, and with the full knowledge that all five clusters on reform under consideration by the intergovernmental negotiations process are all interlinked and mutually reinforcing, we should endeavour to bring those positions closer and urge all delegations to muster the political will necessary to do so.

We commend the constructive efforts by the co-Chairs, Ambassadors Christian Braun and Lana Nusseibeh, Permanent Representatives of Luxembourg and the United Arab Emirates, respectively, during the

seventy-third session. We look forward to the early commencement of the intergovernmental negotiations session for the seventy-fourth session and reaffirm our support, as always. My delegation looks forward to engaging in open, transparent and inclusive negotiations with a view to moving the process forward during the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 122.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.