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STATEMENT BY

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**QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION OF AND INCREASE
IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND
RELATED MATTERS; FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF THE
MILLENNIUM SUMMIT (117 and 120)**

United Nations General Assembly

NEW YORK, 20 July 2006

Mr. President,

- I would like to use this occasion to make a few remarks which I share with the Ambassador of the Bahamas with whom I have the privilege to serve as Vice-Chairs 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. These observations have arisen out of our consultations with various delegations over the past few months.
- A majority of Member States believe that reform of the Security Council is an integral part of the overall UN-reform agenda. Now that we make steady progress on the reform issues, the feeling is widely shared that it is time to look at the remaining assignments of the World Summit Outcome Document, including Security Council reform.
- Despite the increasing call to deal with this reform issue, many, diverging, factors continue to complicate realization of Security Council reform. Some countries think the implementation of other reforms is more important at this moment. Others think the issue is too divisive. Again others, although not many, are quite satisfied to maintain the current status quo.
- In addition, there is another factor that is perhaps less often expressed, but nonetheless deeply felt. Many Member States do want to change the current composition and adapt the power structure to better reflect geopolitical realities. But they are hesitant to do so in a static way: by replacing the present with a new fixed power structure. Any solution should, in that view, reflect the fact that the world is dynamic and that today's likely candidates for a permanent seat can be different ones tomorrow.
- Following from this, is - as we see it - a growing interest in the idea of pursuing a transitional solution. Such a solution would enable some countries and underrepresented regions to assume increased responsibility for world affairs. The solution would not be an immutable arrangement, but one which may last for, say, 10 years. As such, it would considerably lower the stakes, and could thus lead to more flexibility and readiness to compromise on the substantive modalities of the reform.
- One such difficult modality is the choice whether or not to expand with permanent seats. Some continue to believe that the power balance in the Council can only be altered by adding new permanent members. Others believe that adding permanent members will only exacerbate the problem of decision making by a handful of countries. In an interim arrangement, Members could serve in the Council on a longer-term basis, say 5 years, with the possibility of a renewal of their seats. Their longer-term presence could increase their clout in the Council. Their contribution will be important, and it would provide them with an opportunity to exemplify their aspirations to eventually become a permanent member.
- Another outstanding issue remains the right to the veto power. It is hard to imagine any solution in which the veto power is extended to new Council Members at this point. At the same time, many countries wish, for different reasons, the veto power issue to remain on the agenda. It could be part of a temporary solution, to include a path of discussions on that very issue, culminating in a thorough review after the 10-year period.
- When discussing an adaptable arrangement, some other difficult questions obviously remain. What is the number of seats that will keep the Council both effective and efficient, and yet make it more representative of the larger membership? Some consider a number around 25 as minimally required to cater for enough countries and to ensure that all regions would support the reform. Others believe that a figure around 20 is a maximum. A temporary arrangement could either make the ultimate choice, or take a more gradual approach. Some argue that we could start at the lower end, while keeping the option of adding more when the temporary solution will be reviewed.

Mr. President,

- As stated, it has proven to be very difficult to find a permanent solution to reform the Security Council. Many years of Open Ended Working Group discussions, a World Summit, followed by a year of debates and consultations have not yet brought about a model that can count on a strong majority in the General Assembly.
- The option of a solution of a temporary nature is more and more coming to the forefront. Prime Minister Blair had made references to that as well as the Secretary-General at various recent occasions. The SG advised us in a speech in Rome: "Find a way to reach a compromise to get you to the Council table, and from there, you continue your search for a permanent solution". While the proposed permanent arrangements are still on the table in the form of draft resolutions, it might indeed be useful to also look together more closely to a temporary arrangement, where the chances of a broad agreement may be better and therefore the necessary adaptation may be realized sooner. During the interim period, discussions can and should continue on finding a durable solution.

Mr. President,

- Allow me to say one word on the Security Council working methods. During our consultations, the Vice-Chairs of the OEWG discerned that the majority of Member States see great virtue in reform of the Council's working methods which could be an important avenue for making that body more transparent, inclusive and effective.
- The Security Council yesterday endorsed a Presidency's Note on this topic. The Note contains a set of measures to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work, as well as the interaction and dialogue with non-Council members. The recent work in the Security Council Working Group followed the initiative by the S5, who have contributed greatly to the debate with the introduction of their draft resolution. Both tracks have been described as "processes". Certainly, the Presidency's Note, a welcome first step, leaves further work to be done. It is my feeling that a large majority of the General Assembly would find it beneficial if ultimately some form of convergence of these two processes could be found.

Mr. President,

- In sum, today's debate proves that the issue of Security Council reform is alive. We should continue the discussion on the working methods of the Council. It is our belief that it would also be useful to inject the idea of an interim arrangement on enlargement into our consultations and debates. If we are daring, we can be creative. And if we are creative, we can achieve results.

Thank you.