

An informal meeting of the Plenary of 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

**Statement by
Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin
Permanent Representative**

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Co-Chairs and distinguished colleagues,

India aligns with the statements delivered by the Permanent Representative of St. Vincent and Grenadines, on behalf of the L 69, and the Permanent Representative of Japan, on behalf of the G 4. I would like to make few brief points in my national capacity.

Co-Chairs,

2. It is true that the subjects chosen for discussion in today's meeting, namely the regional representation cluster and the principles that are germane in this regard are a path that we have traversed many a time before. Nevertheless, in the spirit of constructive engagement we are participating, with the hope that no two journeys, even along the same path are alike.

3. We can only assume that these subjects have been chosen as in your assessment many delegations called for continuing the discussions on these topics - even as others, including ours, urged that we move on from this cycle of re-stating known positions. By the same token though, we hope that equal consideration will be given to calls made by a large number of delegations for movement towards a single document with attribution of various positions, as well as the introduction of measures to promote transparency in our proceedings, such as webcast and maintenance of records.

Co-Chairs

4. We have discussed principles in previous sessions. We all adhere to the principles of representativeness, democracy, transparency and accountability. Similarly, all of us aim for reforms that will help make the Security Council more legitimate, more effective and more efficient. Our commitment to these principles and those of the UN charter is reflected in the General Section of the 7 June 2019 paper. What is required now is to convert these principles into concrete options for a reformed Security Council, while addressing the issue of regional representation.

Co-Chairs

5. Any discussion of the notion of regional representation needs to begin by acknowledging that the term “regional representation” is not something mentioned in the UN Charter. The nearest reference in the Charter is to “equitable geographical distribution”. Regional representation we must remember is therefore a subset of the broader principle of equitable geographical distribution to address a unique situation. It pertains to a vast region, covering an entire regional group which has evolved institutions and organisations to such an extent that it is able to unanimously agree to address issues of peace and security through a collective prism. Regional representation is, therefore a unique paradigm. It is not a paradigm which all regions can replicate. Discussions have made it clear that neither are all regions prepared or required to do so. It is a paradigm designed to celebrate and appreciate a rare effort at unity, not a one size fits all. Where it fits, as demonstrably in the case of Africa, we welcome it; where it doesn’t, we have to fall back to the charter-established notion of equitable geographical distribution. In this format, that is now in operation all states represent themselves it is only in a regional representation paradigm that states represent a region in accordance to the consensual agreement of the regional group. Individual states may today say that they represent a region, that is an individual choice, not a regional choice or a charter mandated choice.

Co-Chairs,

6. Africa is the lone instance where, over the years, a unique common approach towards international peace and security has evolved. This has no parallel in any regional group. Africa has also converged on a unanimous approach to region-wide Common African Position on the issue of Security Council Reform – the only regional group to do so. There is no other parallel.

7. We have all agreed, under the ‘Commonalities’ section of regional representation of the Revised elements of commonality paper of 7 June 2019 under 6d (page 4) that Africa should be ‘equitably’ represented in a reformed Security Council. Since we are discussing principles today, I would like to ask - exactly how would it be ‘equitable’ for African aspirations as espoused through the Common African Position to be accommodated through a model of representation that will not entail expansion in the permanent category? How will there be equitable representation on the Council if we are to adopt a model of expansion that will lead to no representation for two of the 5 current regional groups - Africa and Latin America- at all in the permanent category? We look forward to hearing a response from those who advocate otherwise.

8. Let us look at it in another way. I understand there is a Latin axiom “Nihil de nobis, sine nobis”. Apparently it translates in English as “Nothing about us without us”. In policy terms it means that no policy should be decided without full and direct involvement of members of the group that will be affected by it. We hear this all the time at the UN.

9. Now, let us see how this applies in the case of regional representation. We have a situation where a regional group, working at the highest level, has come to a collective decision of the model of representation they wish to see for themselves. They clearly envisage that equitable representation means their region be represented in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. It is a simple model, known to the charter. It is a model that they have taken considerable time to develop and it is a model that they have held firmly firmly to. Yet what is being offered to them is an alternative model that is contrary to what they aspire for. An option crafted with no African participation is

promoted as a panacea for all of Africa's objectives. This offering prepared from outside is being promoted as better serving Africa's needs than a home grown product.

Co-Chairs

10. The pathway of regional representation is a creative notion to provide for a unique mechanism for an entire region - Africa. Regional representation can only make sense if it is designed by the region for itself, or seen by the region concerned as meeting the aspirations of that region, even if conceived elsewhere. These criteria are met only by one option of the options listed in the 7 June 2019 paper, under the issues for further consideration. That is the option that provides for expansion in both categories. No other model does so.

11. More specifically, the model articulated by Africa as a model for itself in the Ezulwini consensus and the Sirte Declaration is the only model of regional representation designed and acceptable to an entire region. There is no other model of regional representation that is either designed or acceptable to an entire region or complete regional group, despite decades of discussion of regional representation.

12. If a model for a region's representation agreed to unanimously by all its leaders at the Summit level and supported by numerous others repeatedly here and elsewhere can't pass muster at the IGN, what else can? If we have to seriously address regional representation then we have to acknowledge that Africa's representation as postulated in the Ezulwini consensus and Sirte Declaration as the only means of equitable representation of Africa in a reformed Security Council. This, therefore, has to be reflected in the commonalities part of any text that emerges from our current discussion.

Co-Chairs

13. We encourage the specific formulation for inclusion be done in consultation with Africa. Needless to add India, in line with its long-standing approach, will fully support any African solution to address African concerns.

Thank you Co-Chairs.
