

Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, during Informal Meeting of the Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council

(7th March 2022)

Co-Chairs,

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus (UfC) Group.

2. We live in difficult times – when the principles and structures built to build peace 75 years ago are under extreme stress. It is equally clear that the United Nations, especially the Security Council and the General Assembly, are required to play a critical and constructive role in restoring and maintaining international peace and stability.

Co-Chairs,

3. We have taken note of your letter of 11 February 2022 and information you have provided on the schedule of the IGN meetings. In our view, it would have been better to devote one session of the IGN to each of the 5 clusters in order to allow a more substantive discussion of each cluster. It is only through such substantive

discussion that we can identify and build “convergences” and reduce “divergences”.

4. At the same time, it is important to underline that all 5 clusters relating to Security Council reform are interlinked. A comprehensive reform will require agreement on all five clusters.

5. Therefore, we are not in favour of piecemeal approaches to separate clusters. We note your intention to provide oral “updates” at each IGN meeting. However, it would be difficult to discuss progress in a piecemeal way after discussion of a cluster, since they are interlinked. We would discourage any piecemeal updates. In any case, these oral updates represent your “understanding” of the discussions and, like the “Common Elements” issued at the end of the IGN’s annual sessions, will serve only as “reference document” along with the “Common Framework” document of 2015.

6. Until there is convergence on all five clusters, it would be premature to start any text-based negotiations. If such a precipitate move is made, it will polarize positions and risk a breakdown in the IGN process. Perhaps this is the intention of those who are pressing for text-based-negotiations. This is not something that we support.

We note your intention to hold “informal-informal” consultations and will gladly participate in any constructive discussions to broaden convergences and reduce divergences.

7. However, if progress is to be made in the IGN process through such informal consultations, the essential requirement is greater flexibility in the positions of all parties – not innovations in this process. As the history of the Security Council reform process will testify, the UfC is the one group which has displayed the greatest flexibility and offered to modulate its position and proposal in attempts to promote consensus on the issue of Security Council reform.

Co-Chairs,

8. Our discussion of the cluster on Categories of (Security Council) membership must commence with the understanding that this covers the several different “categories” of membership that have been proposed by Member States:

- (i) normal 2 year non-permanent seats;
- (ii) longer-term non-permanent seats;
- (iii) re-electable non-permanent seats;
- (iv) “permanent” seats for a region;
- (v) permanent seats for individual States;
- (vi) permanent seats with a veto;
- (vii) permanent seats without a veto or a “deferred” veto;
- (viii) “floating” seats for one or more group of States.

9. Among these categories, the UfC's clear and strong preference is for the creation of an additional 10-11 seats for normal 2 years non-permanent membership. We can support one of these seats "floating" for the group of small States and the SIDS.

10. We can also consider options for the representation of various regions in various configurations, as a means to accommodate the "historical injustice" against Africa, as well as other groups, including the Arab countries and the OIC member states - which I may say have also claimed such representation.

11. The UfC is prepared to explore compromise solutions will all the concerned groups including consultations with the African group on ways to secure realization of their objectives and aspirations contained in the Ezulwini consensus.

Co-Chairs,

12. What the UfC is not prepared to accept is the creation of additional permanent membership for individual States, as contained in the G-4's proposal.

13. The rationale for our position has been repeatedly articulated. I can summarize this once again:

First, the concept of permanent membership contradicts and violates the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in the UN Charter. It is on the basis of sovereign equality that we entered the United Nations. Most of us were not founding members. We did not contribute to the designation of 5 permanent members in the UN Charter. We cannot now agree to expand this inequality by creating additional permanent members and accepting a status which is less than for sovereign state.

Two, it is now more evident than ever, that the primary reason for the Security Council's frequent failure to respond effectively to conflicts and threats to peace and security is the inability of its permanent members to agree on decisive action. Adding new permanent members will multiply the prospects of paralysis in the Council. As we have said before: the "problem" cannot be the "solution". The UfC's proposal to add 11 non-permanent members will reduce inequality and enlarge the voice and influence of those States which are not involved in great power rivalries and which desire decisive action by the Security Council on the basis of the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. This will add dynamism to the work of the Security Council. Indeed, most improvements in the Security Council's work and procedures have emanated from its non-permanent members.

Three, the addition of six permanent members besides enlarging the prospects of paralysis, also would reduce the prospects for “equitable representation” on the Council – which is indeed the title of this item and the principal objective of Security Council reform. While 11 States would be “permanently” represented on the Council, the other 182 Member States will have to compete for election to the remaining 15 seats on the Council. The “balance” of power and influence would be even more heavily tilted towards the permanent members, contradicting the objectives of equity, democracy and representation.

14. The UfC’s proposal to add only non-permanent members, elected periodically by the General Assembly, is more democratic and consistent with the Charter’s prescription that the Security Council “acts on behalf” of the entire membership of the General Assembly. It is only the democratic process of election and future re-election by its peers that instils accountability and responsibility in the conduct of States serving on the Security Council.

Co-Chairs,

15. It has been argued by the aspirants that their permanent membership would reflect “current realities” and that they are the most capable implicitly to contribute to the promotion of international peace and security.

16. Recent events have illustrated how rapidly “current realities” can change. And, I do not think that any of these aspirants have covered themselves with glory in contributing to international peace and security in the current crisis. Most of them are or want to become members of alliances led by one or more of the existing permanent members. Are they leaders or followers? Their desire for permanent membership is driven – not by the desire to promote international peace and security – but by narrow ambition for power and privilege. The ambitions of at least some of these aspirants do not match their capacity or inclinations to contribute to the maintenance and promotion of peace and security even as non-permanent members of the Council. What “legitimacy” would their permanent presence bring to the Council?

Co-Chairs,

17. The power of the veto in the Security Council is an integral part of the problem with the creation of new permanent members. Recent events have reinforced the rationale for the UfC’s opposition to the expansion of permanent membership and thus expansion of the veto. We understand the motivation of those who wish to find ways to “moderate” the use of the veto. We are reassured that their proposals are designed to re-invigorate the Charter functions of the General Assembly and are not related to or impinge upon the IG’s consideration of Security Council reform.

Co-Chairs,

18. The UfC looks forward to our discussions today and at our interactive session tomorrow.