

Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan during the Annual Debate on Agenda item 122: entitled 'Question of Equitable Representation on and increase in the Membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council'

(11 November 2024)

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Mr. President,

I wish to thank you for convening this important debate.

2. We also thank you for reappointing Ambassador Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, and Ambassador Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of Kuwait, as Co-Chairs of the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) process and congratulate them on their appointment. They have made significant contributions during the previous IGN cycle and on the Pact for the Future, through a diligent process of consultations to achieve consensus. We are confident that the Co-Chairs will make a substantive contribution this year as well, on the basis of the General Assembly's decision to "build on" the Co-Chairs' Revised Elements Paper and through an agreed work programme of the IGN.

3. Pakistan aligns itself with the statement delivered by Italy on behalf of UfC, and we would like to add a few points in our national capacity. As Italy stated: we need a reform for all but especially for the developing countries.

Mr. President,

4. It is now more evident than ever, especially after the Gaza conflict 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 statistically multiply the prospects of paralysis in the Council. The problem cannot be the solution.

5. As many other member states have said Pakistan remains staunchly opposed to any proposals for the creation of additional permanent seats for individual Member States. Permanent membership was a controversial issue when the Charter was adopted; it remains so today. Permanent membership was imposed into the Charter by the victors of the Second World War as a condition for the creation of the UN. There is no such compulsion today. There is no justification for the creation of 'new centres of privilege' within the UN, contrary to the principle of sovereign equality of UN member states. Any country seeking a more frequent presence on the Security Council should do so by subjecting itself to the democratic process of periodic election by the General Assembly.

Mr. President,

6. The IGN has held constructive discussions in the previous cycle on all five interlinked "clusters" of issues on Security Council reform identified in Decision 62/557. As evident from the Co-Chairs' revised Elements Paper, the areas of convergence have been broadened, and divergences have been further narrowed through the IGN process.

7. However, there remain wide divergences among Member States on several key issues within each "cluster".

8. On the categories of membership, we are happy to note that there is now a convergence on the expansion of 2-year non-permanent seats. There is no convergence on the creation of new permanent members. It is essential to recall that the discussions involved not just two but several categories of membership: 2-year non-permanent seats; longer-term non-permanent seats. re-electable non-permanent seats; permanent seats representing regions; permanent membership with or without a veto and so on.

9. Similarly, there are proposals on the prohibition of the veto; its restriction; its suspension; its expansion (to new permanent members) and its deferment.

10. There is also an emerging consensus that the regional approach offers the best prospect for agreement on Security Council reform. On regional representation, in our view, the "historic injustice" against Africa, as well as Asia, Latin America, SIDS and the Arab Group and OIC must be redressed, and the unequal advantage accorded to Europe rectified.

11. The UfC's proposal to add 11-12 new non-permanent members would offer greater representation to the vast majority of small and medium States, 59 of which have never served on the Security Council. Besides ensuring "equitable geopolitical" representation, a larger number of non-permanent members could balance the inordinate influence of the 5 permanent members and ensure accountability and promote democratization of the Council. On the other hand, the addition of 4 or 6 new "permanent members" would statistically reduce the prospects for representation for the rest of the 182 member States and expand the circle of the unaccountable in the Security Council.

Mr. President,

12. We consider the African demand for two permanent seats for the Continent as very different from the quest of 4 individual States for permanent membership. As we understand it, the two African seats would be filled by States selected by Africa and "accountable" to Africa and could be replaced by Africa. Individual aspirants for permanent membership would be accountable to no one and seek to advance their own national interests and ambitions. In any case, in our multi-polar world, there are more than

4 or 6 States – over 20 – which can, based on their size, defence capability, economic status, peacekeeping role and contributions to peace and security, claim the mantle of more frequent representation on the Security Council. The UfC's offer for longer-term seats, and equitable regional representation, could accommodate the role of these "middle powers" equitably.

13. Lastly, while considerable progress has been made in promoting convergence on the Council's "working methods", there are several additional and innovative proposals which need to be further discussed and agreed on. The Pact confirms that a consolidated "model" for Security Council reform will have to be based on convergences on the 5 clusters. Evolving the language in the Pact confirmed the difficulties of agreed action without convergence on the 5 clusters.

Mr. President,

14. It is, therefore, evident that we will require a substantive – not perfunctory – discussion on each of the 5 clusters which, we all agree, are interlinked. No consolidated "model" of Security Council reform can be developed; nor can text-based negotiations start, until we have reconciled the key "divergences" within and between the five "clusters". The UfC expects that meetings of the IGN will be devoted, as in the past, to each of the 5 clusters and, thereafter, to their inter-linkages across "clusters".

Mr. President,

15. The Pact for the Future has endorsed early reform. It has set no artificial deadline. Any effort to impose a unilateral decision, through a voting process, will be divisive and I believe unsuccessful. It will not only destroy the IGN process – which some seem to desire – but it will also destroy the prospects of early agreement on Security Council reform.

16. The UfC remains open to a frank and detailed discussion on ways and means of accommodating the aspirations of all regional and cross regional groups – within an equitable and comprehensive reform of the Security Council. Neither the Arab Group nor the OIC Member States will accept a reform in which they are not equitable represented. We are convinced that the UfC's proposal can serve as a framework for such an inclusive and equitable reform of the Council.

I thank you.