



PERMANENT MISSION OF MEXICO

**Statement by Ambassador Juan Manuel Gómez Robledo
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Tenth Round of the Intergovernmental Negotiations for Security Council Reform

New York, December 12th, 2013

Mr. Facilitator,

My Delegation is attending this opening session of the 10th round of the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) to address the substance of the United Nations Security Council reform, and not to touch upon its procedural aspects, which have been already clearly articulated by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Italy on behalf of the United for Consensus (UFC) group. Allow me then to refer in depth to the substance of the reform, avoiding the dogmatic aspects that are so utterly common in this chamber.

Mr. Facilitator,

December 3rd marked the 20th anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 48/26, by which we established the Open Ended Working Group for Security Council Reform (OEWG).

Twenty years during which under several modalities we have discussed and debated the various formulas and models to reform the UN Security Council.

Twenty years, during which no single position has been able to prevail over the rest, taking into account that, according to resolution 53/30, such a reform will need to garner the widest possible agreement amongst Member States

Two decades of mutual and unproductive recriminations.

Why is it then that we have not been able to achieve results?

Some will declare that certain groups of countries are “blocking” the reform process, either because they allegedly would not favor an expansion of the Council, or because they have unrealistic demands, thus complicating any agreement. These arguments are baseless.

The majority of Member States are genuinely interested in achieving the reform of the Security Council, but we have not committed enough political will to jumpstart a real negotiating process and leading it towards a solution that is acceptable to all.

In Mexico's view, there is one simple reason for this lack of results: over the past two decades the individual interests of some have been privileged over the collective interest of all.

In twenty years of discussions and nine previous rounds of negotiations we have not been able to sidestep those national ambitions and sit down to negotiate a reform that is acceptable to the required majority, thus achieving most of our national goals, but perhaps not all of them, as in any bargaining process.

Who benefits from this?

Clearly, those who favor the status quo, either to preserve their privileges and power, or to prevent others from benefitting from the reform.

But the majority of Member States, those of us actually seeking a genuine Security Council reform stand to lose, thus deteriorating the credibility of the United Nations as a whole.

It is time to set aside procedural tactics and to start real negotiations.

In this 10th round of negotiations we find ourselves discussing the pertinence of having or not an Advisory Group, its composition, its representativeness or the legitimacy of the document produced by the group.

How are these procedural discussions contributing to the negotiating process?

If we were to continue down this road, we will further polarize the positions of Member States and will make the possibility of reform an even more distant possibility.

The main objective of the reform must consist on guaranteeing that the Security Council is truly representative of the Organization's 193 Member States, and that without compromising its efficiency, it continues to be so in the next decades.

Being a Security Council member is no small task. It involves a true sense of global responsibility and a willingness to serve the international community as a whole. And it is not about the size or weight of the Member States, it is about their commitment to maintaining peace.

There are no small States in this regard. If we are truly determined, each of the 188 Member States that are eligible to the Security Council can make significant contributions to world peace.

If we do not accomplish this reform, we run the risk of condemning the Security Council and the UN to irrelevance. We would be favoring security arrangements outside the UN, or worse, we would be driving Member States to ignore Security Council decisions, as we have seen in the past.

This urgent and much needed reform will not be possible by handing over new privileges to a few Member States, so they can achieve their national ambitions.

After two long decades of discussions one issue is crystal clear: the expansion of permanent seats and the right of veto do not enjoy the wide support of this General Assembly. And we have not been able to reach an agreement in this regard for one single reason: it is an uncomfortable and politically sensitive decision that implies giving privileges to some States above others, while undermining the transparency and accountability of the Council. It also entails all but shutting the door to those Member States –almost 70— that have never been able to serve in the Security Council.

Moreover, an expansion of the permanent category will not rectify the core challenge before us: the lack of an equitable representation in the Council. In fact, if such a path were to be taken, we would be effectively preventing the Security Council from updating and adjusting in the future. It would be like taking a picture, by definition a static exercise, of a world that is, also by definition, dynamic. We would be reproducing the decision taken in 1945, eliminating any possibility to create a Security Council that is able to evolve in accordance with the size and diversity of the United Nations membership.

In short, we could argue that the expansion of the permanent category runs contrary to the progress of contemporary societies, which are progressing towards more democracy, inclusion, transparency, diversity, accountability and better opportunities for all. Mexico's position has always been consistent with this ideal.

However, we fully understand that there are countries –including my own– which are ready to participate more actively and regularly in the Security Council, taking into account their global presence, their geopolitical weight, and their commitment with the maintenance of peace. But these countries cannot be a handful of self-appointed states.

There are many countries that in light of their history, their experience and participation in the peaceful resolution of disputes, because of their contributions to international law and their will to abide by it, their commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, or their financial and human contributions to this Organization –to name just a few criteria–, could absolutely aspire to a permanent seat in the Council.

But they don't do it –we don't do it–, because we favor a different perception of the international order, one in which the legal equality amongst States is more than a simple rhetorical proposition.

We fully understand the aspiration for having a longer presence in the Security Council. Today's composition leaves too many responsibilities in the hands of its five Permanent Members, occasionally with tragic consequences.

We are opposed to permanency. Nothing can assure us that those seeking permanent seats today will be truly representative of the UN membership in 40 or 50 years. Nothing can assure us that they will not abuse their veto power by reasons that have only to do with their domestic politics, instead of looking over international peace, as we have repeatedly seen

with the current permanent members. Moreover, why will we abolish the only power that the General Assembly has over the Security Council, that is the election of its members? Why would we accept a reform that is tailor-made for certain countries instead of one that can benefit us all?

With so many questions, supported on historical evidence, Mexico, along with the United for Consensus (UFC) group, has proposed an alternative formula: to seek for a compromise solution.

A compromise solution has the ability to reconcile two radically different positions. On the one hand, the formula pushed by those States that will spare no effort or cost to get a permanent seat in the Security Council, and that overtime have built a network of political support with this aim. And on the other hand, the proposal preferred by those States that want a better and more balanced Security Council, leaving aside their national interests to favor a more accountable and transparent Council.

To achieve this approach, we have put forward a concrete proposal: to expand the number of non-permanent seats under the basis of equitable geographic representation and establish the principle of immediate reelection or long-term seats, thus allowing those states with a genuine desire to serve and work longer in maintaining international peace and security to do so.

This formula would help us reconcile the legitimate aspirations of all: it would adjust the composition of the Security Council to the new regional realities, granting its due place to representatives of Africa, Asia and Latin American and Caribbean, while guaranteeing a longer presence to those states willing to serve for longer periods. We would thus be preserving accountability and preventing the long-standing inertias that over time will inevitably lead us to a Council which will not be representative of the future correlation of forces in the world.

Mr. Facilitator,

Mexico is committed with this IGN process to reform the UN Security Council and we have shown it with flexibility and with our active and constructive participation throughout this process.

To achieve the reform, we do not need working papers, non-papers or Advisory Groups. We only need flexibility to start discussions towards a compromise proposal that will allow us to breach the gap and bring about a wide agreement that is sustainable for the long run, so we do not have to go over it again in 20 years' time.

We hope that this new round of intergovernmental negotiations can finally deliver this objective.

Thank you.