



Remarks

by

H.E. Mr. John W. Ashe

President of the 68th Session of the United Nations

General Assembly

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Agenda Item 123: Question of equitable representation on and increase in the
membership of the Security Council and related matters

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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to the end of another round of meetings – the tenth so far – of the Intergovernmental Negotiations, Agenda Item 123: the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. As is usually the case on such occasions, we can and should assess where we are and, I hope, dare to wish for a far more productive future.

Member States will recall that, on my election as President of the 68th session of our General Assembly in June 2013, I indicated that I would seek to advance discussions on reform of our organization's principal organs, including the Security Council. In taking up that issue, Members will recall the procedural morass – and I daresay, mistrust – that served as a backdrop. There was a great need for a fresh approach, due in part to the fact that the 67th session had ended without any clear indication of the next steps on the important question of Security Council Reform.

Amidst this challenging context, I held a wide variety of consultations with you, the Member States, in order to ascertain the state of thinking on this question of Security Council reform. With no illusions whatsoever concerning the magnitude and complexity of the task, I set about taking practical steps, beginning with the designation of a member of my Cabinet, Ambassador Noel Sinclair, my Deputy Chef de Cabinet, to serve as focal point for Member States on this agenda item. I subsequently composed an Advisory Group of the Permanent Representatives from six (6) Member States, whose membership reflected the various opinions on this matter and whose sole task was to provide me clear cut advice on possible next steps.

This Advisory Group produced a report in the form of a non-paper which, in keeping with my pledge of transparency, I distributed immediately to Member States. Included with this was a Memorandum from one member of the Group, who wished to separate himself from the outcome and the process to reach it.

Views on the Non Paper are clearly mixed, but I am thankful to Member States who see some merit in this document in the context of the continuing work of the intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) on the basis of General Assembly Decision 62/557. This document remains in the possession of Member States, and I will be communicating the same to my successor, PGA 69.

Most recently, the Chair of the IGN, Ambassador Tanin of Afghanistan, provided me with HIS written assessment of the round in the larger context of the overall engagement with the question of Security Council Reform. Again, this assessment was made available to you, the Member States. I hope Member States find this useful in future sessions of the IGN, and I express my appreciation to Ambassador Tanin for the fortitude and patience that he has shown in guiding the work of the IGN. It is my intent to also communicate Ambassador Tanin's assessment to PGA 69.

In my view, Ambassador Tanin's assessment underscores the complexity and sensitivity of the process of Security Council reform, and it would be foolhardy to under-estimate the challenges inherent in any future negotiations on this issue. Yet, it should not be one from which we shy away. For if we are serious about Security Council reform, then we must be able to face these challenges and agree on a process that will allow for a good faith exchange of views, in a spirit of give-and-take, and with a shared determination to achieve results that are generally acceptable to all sides. Given the magnitude of the issue, this must be both a collective as well as a timely endeavor.

Excellencies,

I sincerely hope that the conclusions we have arrived at during the 68th session have given renewed momentum to the work of the IGN. I also believe that you, the Member States, owe it to yourselves to ensure that the progress that has so far been achieved is not halted or reversed. I urge you to capitalize on this progress so as to ensure that it represents a basis for the continuation of your endeavors in the 69th session, with a view to the

achieving the ultimate goal of starting the process of negotiations. When all is said and done, negotiations remain the only viable framework in which Member States can make the necessary accommodations among the differences in their various positions. I therefore urge you to arrive at that collective decision sooner, rather than later.

Similarly, it goes without saying that for any negotiations, a basic text on which there is sufficiently wide – but not necessarily universal – agreement to proceed should be the desired goal. In keeping with the intergovernmental nature of the process of Security Council Reform, it is, of course, your responsibility – you the Member States – and yours alone, to determine what that text is.

In the spirit of the foregoing considerations, I have presented the Assembly with a carry-over decision which, in my humble opinion, clears the way for a smooth and uneventful start to the work of building on what has so far been achieved. It is a decision that is scrupulously void of any elements that might be considered prejudicial to any side in those negotiations.

This decision is necessary for the Intergovernmental Negotiations to continue in the next session of the General Assembly. I wish all success to my successor, the President of the 69th session, as he continues this process which I hope will be endowed with special importance.

Thank you.
