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Ambassador Somduth Soborun
Permanent Representative of the

Narcissus OEWG 10 April 2008

Mr. President,

I join previous speakers in thanking you for convening today's Open-Ended Working Group meeting on the "Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council". My delegation is also particularly happy to see Ambassador Roble Olhaye as member of the Task Force. While I fully subscribe to the statement made by Ambassador Atoki Iлека of the Democratic Republic of Congo in his capacity as Chairman of the African Group of Ambassadors for the month of April, I should like to make the following additional points:

We have studied carefully the contents of the annexures accompanying your letter of 3 April 2008 and are of the view that the paper submitted by Ambassador Andreas Mavroyiannis on behalf of the Overarching Group and the letter of Ambassador Marcello Spatafora on behalf of the UFC are too distant in content and spirit, with regard to the proposals contained in the letter of Ambassador Antonio Lima, Chairman of the African Group for the month of March. The Overarching Group paper and the UFC paper have a strong bias towards the intermediate option on the assumption that there is an apparent willingness of member States to negotiate on the basis of an intermediate option. The whole idea has been built on the perception of willingness, which has never been tested objectively. The realities on the ground, we are convinced are totally different.

Mr. President,

As you are already aware during the last Summit of the African Union in January this year, the 52 Heads of State and Government of the African Union, in a decision contained in para. (3) of document Assembly/AU/Dec.184 (X) have directed the Permanent Representatives in New York to participate in the forthcoming intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council on the basis of the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration and to report to them for further guidance if needed. The next Summit will be held in June. It is evident therefore that the African Heads of State and Government would expect the intergovernmental negotiations to start soon.

We all know that the Ezulwini Consensus *inter alia* calls for two seats in the category of permanent members with all the privileges associated with it, including veto powers and five non permanent seats for Africa.

We are also aware that in addition to the 52 African countries, more than 50 other countries from different regional groups, according to our count, have called for an expansion in both permanent and non-permanent category.

Mr. President,

The African position combined with the other individual countries who have expressed support for expansion in both categories constitute more than half of the membership of the United Nations. This verifiable number simply destroys beyond any reasonable doubt the myth that there is a willingness on the part of a majority of Member States as of now, to go for an intermediate option. By the way let us remind ourselves that there never was a consensus on the two Reports of the Facilitators nor was there a consensus on the interim approach. What consensus we actually did have was on the UNGA Decision 61/561.

It is quite unfortunate that the first batch of Facilitators did not consider the proposal of those Member States who had suggested either a straw poll or questionnaire to test the preference of Member States with regard to expansion in the category of permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council in a fair, objective, transparent and accountable manner.

Mr. President,

After 14 years of protracted consultations, the Open-Ended Working Group at the 61st Session of the General Assembly achieved a breakthrough in the last minutes by giving a clear mandate to Member States to embark on intergovernmental negotiations on the basis of progress achieved so far as well as on proposals and positions of Member States. We believe that the OEWG has served its purpose as far as consultations are concerned and we should now move to the next stage that is intergovernmental negotiations without any further delay. This is why therefore we propose that within a period of two to three weeks from now, the Task Force produces a document and subsequently presents it to an informal plenary of the General Assembly convened by the President of the General Assembly at which intergovernmental negotiations would take place.

Mr. President,

The process of the reform of the Security Council is stuck primarily on our differences, appreciation and approach with regard to the expansion in the category of permanent membership. There are those which I call, *Open and Declared Aspirants*, *Semi-Aspirants*, *Wishful-Aspirants*, *Non-Aspirants* and *the Friends for the expansion of permanent memberships*. And we should add to these another group that is the present

owners of the Security Council who hold the key and decide whether to open the door in the category of permanent membership or not. Obviously, we very well understand and appreciate the chemistry and the dynamics of these groups within the OEWG.

Therefore, in view of the heterogeneous set of views in the OEWG and in line with the UNGA decision 61/561 towards initiating intergovernmental negotiations and in particular para. (d) which *inter alia* states “.....that further concrete results may be achieved, including through intergovernmental negotiations, building on the progress achieved so far, particularly at the sixty-first session, as well as the positions of and proposals made by Member States”, we propose that the following should constitute the elements for negotiations:-

- Expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories
- Greater representation to the developing countries
- Representation to the developed countries and those with transition economies, reflective of contemporary world realities
- Comprehensive improvement in the working methods of the Security Council, including ensuring greater access to island and small states
- Provision for a review.

As far as the working methods are concerned we consider them as an integral part of the entire reform process of the Security Council. They should be treated as such and should go hand in hand with the enlargement of the Council.

Before concluding Mr. President I should like to add that like all other member States, my delegation too, support the Seven Pillars in moving the reform process forward. However, I wish to express my observation on the sixth pillar which states that “The reform of the Security Council must accommodate interest and concerns of all sides, especially those who are currently under-represented”. Actually it is not only a question of “under represented” but also a question of those which are “not represented” as is the case for Africa which has no representatives in the Council as permanent members. This pillar as it stands now, in my view, pre-emptively shuts down the Elzuwini Consensus.

Finally Mr. President I once again wish to reiterate my delegation’s preparedness to work close with you and the Task Force under your able guidance and the member States for a meaningful and comprehensive reform of the Security Council in a most objective and transparent manner.

Thank you.