



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Related Matters

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Mr. President,

1. Let me first thank you for convening this meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Related Matters. My delegation commends your efforts to facilitate discussion and to move forward the process of Security Council reform. We will continue to support your efforts to guide us through deliberations on this highly sensitive and complex issue involving vital national interests.

Framework and Modalities of Negotiations

Mr. President,

2. **The Republic of Korea is ready to enter into negotiations.** In order to begin, it is of the utmost importance to reach **agreement on all questions concerning the framework and modalities of the negotiations in advance** so that we know how the negotiations will be conducted. As you mentioned in your concluding remarks at the last plenary meeting, Mr. President, the Open-ended Working Group should carry out consultations to decide these issues, **based on the seven pillars** you outlined. My delegation is concerned that if we enter into negotiations without prior agreement and clarification on these matters, the considerable misunderstanding and confusion among the Membership would undermine the chances for success and lead to divisiveness.

Principle of General Agreement

Mr. President,

3. I share your belief that the process of Security Council reform should not divide the United Nations and widen the gap among the Membership. Exhaustive efforts should be made to accommodate the interests and concerns of all sides. We should create a favourable political atmosphere to produce a general agreement. To this end, we should avoid any unilateral action that might force divisive and potentially damaging negotiations among the Member States. All parties should agree to refrain from any attempts to set an artificial deadline for negotiations or to impose unilateral proposals upon others.

4. As you mentioned, Security Council reform is a process. **Agreement should therefore be reached at each stage, before we move on to the next, based on the principles of general agreement** and that “nothing is agreed unless everything is agreed.” We share your view that this mode should be retained during the 62nd session of the General Assembly.

Role of the Open-ended Working Group

5. The Member States agreed during the 61st session that **the Open-ended Working Group is the legitimate place to discuss Security Council reform**. Paragraph C of the decision 61/561 gives an unmistakable mandate to the Open-ended Working Group to discuss all aspects of Security Council reform. To quote: “[The General Assembly] Urges the Working Group to exert efforts during the sixty-second session, aimed at achieving general agreement among Member States in the consideration of all issues relevant to the question of equitable representation on and increases in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council”.

6. **Negotiations should therefore be conducted strictly within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group**. Any attempts to establish a separate forum for consultations and negotiations outside of the Open-ended Working Group, without the proper mandate of the Membership, are inconsistent with the agreement reached at the last session of the General Assembly. Nor should we accept any proposals that undermine or marginalize the Working Group.

7. Arguments have been made that paragraph D of the same decision allows negotiations outside of the Open-ended Working Group. We believe that paragraph D must be read in tandem with paragraph C, in the context of the decision as a whole, in a manner consistent with Article 31 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. In this context, it is clear that when paragraph D states that Security Council

reform should be considered “during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly”, it refers to the temporal aspect, not the forum.

8. In a nutshell, the decision clearly envisages the existence of the Open-ended Working Group and mandates it as the primary body to deal with Security Council reform. There are no grounds for pretending otherwise. The authority and legitimacy of the Open-ended Working Group were conferred by General Assembly resolution 48/26 and, more recently, by decision 61/561. Because the General Assembly created and empowered the Open-ended Working Group, another resolution would be required to rescind that authority.

9. In this regard, the creation of another group that undermines Open-ended Working Group and attempts to impose the views of the few on the rest of the Membership is no way to begin serious negotiations in good faith. Further steps down this road will only lead to division and confrontation among the Membership.

Elements on Negotiables

Mr. President,

10. While the Republic of Korea supports the objective of Security Council reform, we believe that reform is worthwhile only if it is consistent with the fundamental principles of transparency, efficiency, accountability and representativeness. We believe that the addition of permanent members would go against these principles, which is not in the best interests of the United Nations or its Member States.

11. The Republic of Korea has consistently maintained the position that the best way to reform the membership of the Council is through an increase in non-permanent, elected seats, not through the addition of permanent members. To guarantee accountability, elections are needed — and not just a single election that entitles the winners to remain in office in perpetuity, but recurring, periodic elections at which the Member States will have an opportunity to review the performance of the Council members and respond accordingly. Without accountability, the effectiveness of the Council would also be undermined. For these reasons, we are opposed to the addition of new permanent members to the Security Council.

12. My delegation believes that **consultations and negotiations during the 62nd session of the General Assembly should build upon the progress made during the 61st session.** The report submitted by the Facilitators made a good summary of the positions and proposals of all sides. Given the persistent

differences of view, we believe that **the report could be a good basis for negotiations**. My delegation is open to the intermediate approach proposed by the Facilitators, if that can garner a general agreement.

13. We believe that various issues raised by the Facilitators' report, including the question of the veto, the Council's working methods and regional representation, should be further discussed in an open and transparent manner.

Mr. President,

14. The Republic of Korea has consistently supported Security Council reform. We are willing to explore appropriate formulas that garner the general agreement of the Membership. In this connection, my delegation supports your leadership on this important issue. I hope that you will continue to engage in extensive consultations with all sides in an impartial and all-inclusive manner.

15. Let me close by calling on all Member States to take an approach based on accommodation and compromise. The Republic of Korea is ready to work constructively with all Member States and groups during the current session of the General Assembly.

Thank you.