

**Remarks by H.E.  Ambassador Maged A. Abdelaziz, the Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt, before the fifth exchange of the 8<sup>th</sup> round of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the reform of the Security Council (10 April 2012): The African Common Position**

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- At the outset, I wish to thank you, Ambassador Tanin, for continuing with your programme of work during the 8<sup>th</sup> round of the Intergovernmental Negotiations providing us the opportunity today to reflect on the African Common Position.
- I would like to start by associating Egypt's remarks with the comprehensive presentation of the African Common position made by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Sierra Leon on behalf of the African Group.
- The African Common Position is clear and reflects Africa's legitimate rights and aspirations in relation to the Security Council reform. It is one of the most comprehensive positions among other positions of States and Group of States. It covers the five interlinked key issues in full conformity with General Assembly decision 62/557.
- In this regard, I would like to recall that the African Common Position as outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration was complemented and enabled to cover all the five key issues- negotiable- of the reform of the Security Council through endorsing the African position on the working methods of the Security Council, and its relationship with the General Assembly in the 14th African Union Summit held in Addis Ababa in January 2010.
- Furthermore, it is important to note that the African Common position does not seek to achieve national political interests, rather than a position that aims at achieving regional objective through fulfilling the legitimate aspiration of a whole continent to correct the historical injustice.

- Thus, Africa is not just a negotiating like-minded group, but rather the only and biggest **regional** negotiating group with a coherent common position comprising 54 member states. Therefore, the legitimacy and justice of the African cause reflected in the African Common position is unchallengeable.
- Reflecting on the numbers as to make a case in point, the number of African member states in the UN has reached 54, they are not represented in the Security Council except by 3 non-permanent seats, whereas the Asian Group which is similar in number is represented by 2 non-permanent and one permanent seat, the Eastern European Group which is composed of 23 member states is represented by one non-permanent and one permanent seat, the GRULAC which is composed of 33 member states is represented by 2 non-permanent seats, and finally the WEOG which is composed of 29 member states is represented by 2 non-permanent and 3 permanent seats.
- This reflects the imbalance in the regional distribution in the Security Council. As Africa, for example, is not represented in the permanent category, even though the African States represent more than quarter of the general membership of the United Nations, and more than 70% of the issues and cases being considered by the Security Council are relating to the continent. On the other hand, Africa remains under-represented in the category of the non-permanent seats, compared to all other regions. Thus, the principle of the equitable geographical distribution, as one of the criterion stated in article 23 of the Charter for the non-permanent membership in the Council, is simply not applied in the case of Africa.
- A balanced Regional representation is also closely linked to the size of the enlarged Security Council. Therefore, when the Ezulwini Consensus states that Africa is demanding, inter alia, **no less** than two permanent seats with all prerogatives and privileges, including the Veto right, that should be read in a

sense that Africa might demand more permanent seats if other regions smaller in number are getting more seats than their ratio of representation.

- The African selection of its candidates, as reflected in Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, should not be seen in contradiction with article 23 of the Charter which naturally will continue to govern the election process in the General Assembly. But will not be subject to evaluation by other Members of the Council. We also believe that an enlarged Security Council with at least 26 seats will not negatively affect neither the efficiency nor the effectiveness of the Council. It will rather enhance representability, democracy and good governance.
- With regard to the issue of the categories of membership, limiting the expansion of the Security Council to the non-permanent category only is not an option for Africa. The same applies to expanding in the permanent category without the Veto rights. As both options will neither change the power structure of the Council nor correct the historical injustice to Africa.
- As per the Veto, and as the African position is built originally on the abolition of the Veto, Egypt proposed in earlier meetings a way forward to advance the negotiations on the Veto rights of new and current permanent members together, could be the consideration of restricting the Veto rights of current and new permanent members together, to exclude cases that are related to the Responsibility to protect and others such as genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, grave violations to international humanitarian law, cessation of hostilities between belligerent parties and the election of the Secretary General. Naturally, the acceptance of the current Permanent Members is essential for this approach to be ratified and put into action.
- The African demand for the elimination of the Veto in its entirety is closely tied to its demand to grant the veto to the new African permanent members in

the Council until its elimination, in full application of the principle of equality between current and new permanent members. We can do that one shot, which would meet with tremendous opposition or do it gradually through narrowing the scope.

- We are not seeking any kind of agreement, but rather we look for an agreement that would have an effect on the power structure of the Security Council. This simply requires that we concentrate on reaching agreement on the most difficult and the most simple topics at the same time, instead of proposing framework draft resolutions expecting that other negotiables left to be decided upon in the future would easily and automatically fall in.
- Finally Mr. Chairman a few words on the attitude of the other negotiating groups towards the African Common Position. Expressions of sympathy or oral support to the African common position have been repeatedly expressed and stressed time and again by the different negotiating groups. As much as we do appreciate this support, we expect it to be translated into action through the alignment of the other group's official position to the African Common position in Rev. 2 of the compilation text. Therefore, adding the Veto to the short draft resolution by G4/L.69 would ensure that we will enlarge the council in both categories with the Veto being part of the expansion in the permanent category. We hope that the G4 will be convinced, so that we can have the numbers necessary to reflect the widest possible political acceptance.
- With regard to proposals for Straw Poll, it runs against General Assembly decision 62/557 calling for the widest possible political acceptance by Member States. On the other hand, why having only straw poll on categories and not having it on all other negotiable, including the Veto the regional representation, and that everybody should accept the outcome of such straw poll. We reject any selective approach that undermines the IGN. In addition, the IGN is not

bankrupt or did not fail to go for such approach that we could have done it 18 years ago instead of wasting Member States time and UN resources.

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