

# STATEMENT

by

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and

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New York**

*for and on behalf of the African Group*

*at*

**THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE PLENARY ON THE  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE  
QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON AND  
INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY  
COUNCIL AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED TO THE  
COUNCIL**

**NEW YORK, Tuesday April 10 2012**

*Please check against delivery*

**Mr. Chairman,**

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group and to express our profound thanks to you for today's meeting, which will be devoted to the African Common Position on Security Council Reform. We note your informative opening remarks this morning which will provide further guidance for our deliberations.

The African Common Position has evolved over time. After the Harare Declaration of 1997, it eventually emerged out of the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration of 2005 and complemented in Libya by our Heads of State and Government in 2009 to cover Africa's position on Working Methods of the Security Council and the Relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, following the recommendation of C-10 Foreign Ministers during the Kampala Summit that year. Our position therefore offers a comprehensive architecture in the Security Council Reform process, covering all the 5 clusters and mindful of their interconnectedness.

By letter of December 23 2009, we conveyed to you our full position for accurate incorporation in the proposed compiled text. Our participation in the Intergovernmental Negotiations is accordingly solidly anchored on that platform, as reflected in

Rev.2 of the compiled text. In this regard, our position fully complies with General Assembly Decision 62/557, which we will continue to uphold strictly, and we encourage other delegations to do the same.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In response to your letter of August 18, 2011, requesting member states to submit initiatives, we indicated in our letter of 6 September 2011, that C-10 was still holding consultations and was very much open to further consultations with such interest groups who have come up or are likely to come up with initiatives on the Security Council Reform. We believe that some of these consultations are heading towards a direction which, when fully crystallized, may facilitate and lead to early reform of the Council. We also reiterated that the African Common Position, as contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration continues to enjoy broad support from the general membership.

We have endeavoured to maintain an open door policy of inclusion in these consultations with the much desired aim of finding a solution in the reform process that will garner the widest possible political acceptance of the membership.

As indicated in our letter, support for the African Common position has gained momentum and continues to receive more support in these deliberations for Africa's legitimate claim for permanent membership in the Security Council, and to correct its under-representation in the non-permanent category within the context of addressing the historical injustice done to the continent as being the only region not represented in the permanent category. This claim is without controversy recognized and acknowledged as legitimate by the general membership and we submit it ought to be redressed without further delay. Any delay would mean further perpetuating and compounding injustice; thus denying the continent its dignity and rightful place in a major decision making

organ of this organization.

We note that the problem has been how to redress this historical injustice. Proposals and opinions proffered by diverse interest groups differ. One important area of division is on the issue of the veto. Africa's opposition to the veto is clear, but maintains that as long as it continues to exist, it should be extended to new permanent members as a matter of common justice.

**Mr. Chairman,**

On this issue, we are inspired by your assessment contained in the Chair's letter circulated to the membership in document A/63/960 with particular reference to the letter of 13 March 2009, wherein, dealing with the question of the veto, you inter alia stated as follows: "Permanent members themselves did not rule out extending the veto....." We believe that today's Exchange will provide a window of opportunity to further reflect on this assessment and to receive more views of member states on the matter.

Let me at this point proffer some clarifications on the African Common position.

**Firstly**, with reference to the question of whether our position is a take it or leave it proposal and what compromise we can afford, the African Common position is a legitimate demand to redress an historical injustice as the only continent/region without representation in the permanent category of the Security Council and also under-represented in the non-permanent category as presently constituted, although it is the largest of the regions of the UN with 54 members, and with three quarters of the agenda of the Security Council being African issues. As has been stated every so often in support of our claim, Africa's position for at least two permanent seats - with all the rights and obligations of current

members, including the veto, and two additional non-permanent seats is a matter of common justice and the right to have an equal say in decision-making on issues of international peace and security, and in particular those that concern our Continent. It is also a matter of democracy. Above all, it is about the dignity of a people and the dignity of a Continent. Africa's position must therefore be viewed as a continental aspiration and should be given merit for consideration as a special case in recognition of the special needs of Africa - a workable principle very much accepted and respected in the UN.

We have shown flexibility on the question of the veto in the sense that we call for its abolition; but we are prepared to accommodate its existence as long as it is extended to new permanent members. Ours is therefore a compromise position in dealing with this very contentious issue.

**Secondly**, on the alleged division of our membership – some being members of the L-69, you have all heard from them clearly that they are in the L-69 as facilitators but remain committed to the African Common position.

**Thirdly**, on the question of who our candidates would be, we have said before that the selection will be a matter for Africa to decide.

**Fourthly**, on the issue of rotation of seats, suffice it to say that it will be in accord with the relevant Charter arrangements.

**Finally**, we wish to reiterate that the African common position is a product of a common consensus reached on this important matter of the Security Council Reform. It champions our common aspiration for the full representation of Africa in all decision-making organs of the UN, particularly the Security Council, which is the principal decision-making organ in matters relating to international peace and security.

Let me at this juncture, thank all interest groups and delegations for their continued support of the African common position, which we hope will be further buttressed and reconfirmed today in clear and unambiguous terms. We will continue to engage all reform-minded groups in moving the process of the Security Council reform towards achieving decisive progress in order to better reflect contemporary world realities and to make the Council more representative, legitimate, transparent and accountable.

In that connection, we continue to urge delegations and all interest groups that have made and will today make open pronouncements in support of our position to harmonize them accordingly with their positions in the compilation text, by effecting the necessary amendments.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In concluding, we reiterate our firm commitment to the process for an early reform of the Security Council that will make the Council more representative, legitimate, transparent and accountable; and mindful of the current geopolitical realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I thank you for your attention.

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