



په ملگرو ملتوکی
د افغانستان اسلامي جمهوریت
دایمی نمایندگی - نیویارک

Permanent Mission of the Islamic
Republic of Afghanistan to the
United Nations

نماینده گی دایمی
جمهوری اسلامی افغانستان
در ملل متحد - نیویارک

20 March 2009

Excellency,

In strict conformity with the Work Plan elaborated by the President of the General Assembly and embraced by Member States during our successful 19 February launch of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council reform, I am herewith providing guidance to Member States on the path to decisive progress. Following our productive 16 and 17 March exchange on the question of the veto, Member States on 24 March will address regional representation, the next of the five key issues as enumerated in GA Decision 62/557. During the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, the membership addressed Security Council reform along such lines, be it at an entirely different stage of the process and in an entirely different forum. Given our common purpose to, in an open process, build on rather than repeat, inter alia, the outcome of that previous exercise, let me for your convenience recite this outcome as far as regional representation is concerned, through a literal and integral excerpt from document A/61/47, defined in subparagraph iii of paragraph e of Decision 62/557 as part of the basis for the Intergovernmental Negotiations:

“Question of regional representation

There seemed to be a common understanding that the Security Council in its current composition does not reflect the geopolitical realities and thus needs to be adequately rebalanced:

- *The majority of delegations were of the view that the rebalancing of the Security Council needs to be based on “the contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization”, as well as on equitable geographical representation, as stipulated in Article 23 of the Charter.*
- *Nevertheless, some delegations pointed out that additional objectives and measurable criteria had yet to be worked out to define the necessary capabilities of States relevant to the maintenance of international peace and security. Proposals included the level of financial contribution to the United Nations, population, regional role and standing, size of military forces and contributions to peacekeeping operations.*



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In the course of the discussion there seemed to be a twofold understanding of the term "regional representation":

- *Some delegations identified the term "regional representation" as identical to the "equitable geographical distribution" as contained in Article 23.1 of the Charter.*
- *Other delegations expressed the view that the term "regional representation" should be understood as the regional seat leading to regional accountability. They argued that the notion of regional representation, in the sense of Member States representing regional views, could be explored further. Different options were suggested, such as candidatures to be proposed directly by Member States or through regional consensus, it being understood that the final decision is to be taken by the General Assembly through the election process as set out in the Charter. Another suggestion was that members of the Council should be deemed, if they so wish, to also represent the views of regional groups to which they belong while continuing to act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.*
- *However, a wide number of delegations felt that, at this stage, the non-permanent members of the Security Council, although proposed on a regional basis, could not represent their respective regions. Rather, as members of the Council, they should have a global accountability and an obligation to the international community as a whole.*
- *In addition, many delegations were of the view that the concept of regional seats, given the different character of each regional group as well as the existing differences in their internal working procedures, was not feasible at this stage.*

Although the composition of the existing regional groups was challenged as not accurately reflecting geopolitical realities, there seems to be a wide understanding that the restructuring of the current system is not realistic. The majority is thus still of the view that the principle of the equitable geographic distribution should be exercised through the existing structures. Nevertheless, opinions varied on how to amend the situation, in particular with respect to defining the underrepresented.

The discussion brought out several interpretations within the category of the underrepresented. Accordingly, the underrepresented were classified in the following manner:



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- *Within the existing group arrangements, there was a general feeling that Africa, Asia and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States were underrepresented. Some opined that the Group of Eastern European States was also underrepresented.*
- *There was also a broad understanding that small and developing countries are underrepresented as a general rule. In addition, some delegations pointed out that small and developing countries from Africa, Asia and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States were underrepresented in particular.*
- *Some delegations were of the opinion that there was a need for an enlarged Security Council to represent all cultures, religions and civilizations. In that respect, although various political organizations were mentioned as candidates for a Council seat, the majority of delegations argued it would contradict the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations and therefore proposed that their legitimate concerns should be accommodated through other means.*

Bearing in mind the inseparable links between the "regional representation" cluster and those of "Size" and "Categories of membership", it might prove to be very difficult to devise any workable solution prior to the agreement on the number of seats to be distributed. However, since it can be argued that the notions of contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and equitable geographical distribution constitute the fundamental elements of any future fair and just solution, they should be taken into account as a general principle during deliberations as well as at the early stages of the eventual future negotiations on size and categories."

The above excerpt from document A/61/47 should of course also be read in conjunction with, in particular, the new inputs and reaffirmed views as contained in document A/62/47, similarly defined in subparagraph iii of paragraph e of Decision 62/557 as part of the basis for the Intergovernmental Negotiations. Through his Work Plan, the President of the General Assembly has exhorted Member States to flesh out the substantive underpinning of the meetings, defined in subparagraphs i and iii of paragraph e of Decision 62/557, and to show the necessary flexibility. Accordingly, during our meetings so far, Member States with regard to the key issue under discussion have clarified their original position where necessary and have not seldom demonstrated flexibility on it, including through new proposals.



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This way, Member States are injecting new life blood into the negotiations. For my part, as Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations, I will continue to promote the interactive nature of our meetings. Member States will thus again be given the opportunity to intervene twice, so they can react to and reciprocate the flexibility shown by their peers, but are also again urged to be concise and to limit their interventions to no longer than three minutes. I remain confident that the good faith and mutual respect in full display over the course of our negotiations hitherto will take us very far very fast. As I already announced in my 17 March closing remarks, on 9 April we will focus on the size of an enlarged Council and working methods of the Security Council, followed on 21 April by a meeting on the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, the last of the five key issues.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration,

Zahir Tanin

Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the United Nations

Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council