

K. Nagaraj Naidu



संयुक्त राष्ट्र स्थित भारत का स्थायी प्रतिनिधि
न्यूयॉर्क

AMBASSADOR AND DEPUTY PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

August 31, 2020

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you on the subject of the draft decision regarding the roll-over of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and matters related to the Security Council, which was circulated today.

2. At the outset, allow me to convey my appreciation for your leadership as the President of the General Assembly during this trying period caused by COVID-19. We also appreciate your engagement with the different groups to find a way to reflect and capture the progress in the two IGN meetings held earlier in the year.

3. As conveyed to you during our earlier meetings as a part of groups and in our last letter to you dated 12 August and also earlier to the IGN co-Chairs on this matter, India is firm in its belief that as the only formal record of the proceedings of the IGN in this critical year of the UN's 75th anniversary, the PGA's roll-over decision must capture clearly the tangible progress made in the two IGN meetings that were held earlier this year.

4. One of the areas in which clear progress was made this year in IGN was the rising chorus of support from members states for the Common African Position as stipulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration as well as for the urgent need for transparency and application of the General Assembly's rules of procedure to the intergovernmental negotiations.

H.E. Dr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande
President of the General Assembly
United Nations
New York

5. The growing support for the Common African Position has, in fact, been reinforced not in one but multiple forums, and from multiple groups.

For the first time, the **Non-Aligned Movement**, comprising 120 member states, expressed support at the highest level for the Common African Position (18th NAM Summit Outcome Document, October 2019: “*The Heads of State and Government supported the African common position as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.*”)

The **G4** came forward to unambiguously back the Common African Position at the Ministerial level (G4 Foreign Ministers’ joint statement, September 2019: “*...expressed their support for adequately reflecting the African Common Position, as contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.*”), and again in its statement at the 74th UNGA plenary debate on this agenda item.

The **L.69** reiterated its support for the Common African Position in its statement to the 74th UNGA plenary debate (November 2019: “*...ensuring a proper reflection of the Common African Position, as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.*”)

The **African Group** continued to make its voice heard, calling for support for Common African Position both in the GA Plenary debate and during both IGN meetings this year, where it was joined by G4, L.69 and others.

6. Consequently, it is only correct and fair that the growing support expressed for the Common African Position in the two meetings of the IGN earlier this year are captured in the body of the roll-over decision. Otherwise, we will be in the danger of endorsing an incorrect perspective of this year’s work and give an impression that nothing has transpired.

7. Further, we do not believe that a reference to the letter dated 29 July 2020 of the two Co-Chairs written to you as PGA and sent to member states, is by itself adequate to reflect the discussions in the IGN in the roll-over decision. The co-Chairs’ letter refers to the growing support “to redress the historical injustice against Africa and to ensure better African representation in a reformed Security Council in line with the Common African Position”. This does not completely and accurately capture the Common African Position per se. While India is fully and unequivocally in support of greater African representation

in the UN Security Council and will continue to be vocal in our support for Africa, the fact is that the said letter does not fully reflect the growing support to Common African Position, and therefore does not adequately capture the strong support to expansion of both categories of Security Council. Therefore, even from a substantive perspective, the growing support to the Common African Position and other important developments have not been reflected in the Co-Chair's letters to the PGA.

8. From the above, it is very clear that the roll-over decision does not meet the requirement of clearly capturing tangible progress made in the two IGN meetings that were held earlier this year. This is the least we had expected in the text.

9. This brings one to a much broader issue. In the last decade or more of IGN Meetings (since 2009), there has been practically no progress in the discussions. Even the discussions are dubbed as informal and the UNGA rules of procedure do not apply. In eleven years, the situation has not changed. There has been no attempt to capture the discussions in a single consolidated text for negotiations. In effect, after more than a decade, there has been no tangible progress at all. In fact, the IGN process has become a convenient smokescreen to hide behind for those who do not wish to see any reform in the Security Council. Consequently, there is a need to ensure that the IGN process is not held hostage, procedurally and substantially, by those who do not wish to bring about reform in the Security Council. If this happens, and there are indications that this is already happening, those who demand reform will be forced to look for other ways to achieve the same end outside the IGN process.

10. Therefore, for the various reasons mentioned above, the current draft roll-over text has fallen well short of capturing the progress in the two IGN meetings held this year. However, strangely enough, instead of reflecting the views of "pro-Reformists" like India and others, by putting a draft roll-over decision in this fashion, it is actually providing the "pro-Reformists" with a Hobson's choice. This is indeed unfortunate.

11. It is also ironical that such a draft roll-over decision should be tabled at a time when just last month the United Nations Secretary General HE António Guterres made a clarion call on 18 July 2020 in New York for reform of the UN Security Council. In his address he said "The nations that came out on top more than seven decades ago have refused to contemplate the reforms needed to change power relations in international institutions. The composition and voting rights in the UN Security Council and the boards of the Bretton Woods are a case in point. Inequality starts at the top: in global

institutions.” This call comes in the backdrop of the 75th Anniversary of the UN. And here we are with a draft where we hesitate to reflect even the most incremental of progress towards this goal.

12. Excellency, the draft roll-over text as it is now does not reflect the progress in the two meetings of IGN and does not, even at the very minimum, capture the growing support to the Common African Position and other issues of importance. However, with our abiding commitment to reformed multilateralism and to strengthening this in the UN, India will continue to voice its strong support for tangible action towards an expanded and reformed Security Council that reflects today’s world and realities. We will also take steps to see how we can realize these goals in the 75th session of the UNGA.

13. While we are not breaking silence, I request you, Excellency, to kindly circulate this letter to all member states as official explanation of position of India on the draft roll-over decision.

14. I thank Your Excellency once again for your leadership of this process and your efforts in finding an acceptable roll-over text.

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


(K. Nagaraj Naidu)
Chargé d’Affaires, a.i. 21/08/20