



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS
245 East 49th Street, New York NY 10017**

STATEMENT

By

H.E. Mr. Shekou Momodu Touray
**Ambassador & Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United
Nations on behalf of the African Group in his capacity as
Coordinator of the AU Committee of Ten on the Security Council
Reform**

In

The Informal Plenary meeting of the General Assembly

On

**The Question of Equitable Representation and Increase in the
Membership of the Security Council and other related Matters**

NEW YORK, 4TH MARCH, 2009

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to address this Assembly on behalf of the African Group in my capacity as Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten on the reform of the Security Council. Many thanks for convening this informal plenary meeting of the Assembly on the "Question of Equitable Representation and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Related Matters". We have no doubt that under your able and wise leadership and with our collective efforts, our dream of reforming the Security Council will be translated into reality sooner rather than later

Mr. President

As you may recall, the 12th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of African Union held in Addis Ababa on February 3rd adopted the decision; Assembly/AU/Dec.230 (XII) on United Nations Reform, and requested the Permanent Representatives of the Committee of Ten in New York to actively engage in the intergovernmental negotiations on the basis of Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration.

Mr. President

You would also recall that the outgoing Chairman of the African Group addressed a letter to you on 27th February 2009 succinctly reaffirming the common African position on the reform of the Security as enunciated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. Your attention was equally drawn to your proposed work plan for the intergovernmental negotiations and we expressed our preference with regard to its sequencing, which we still hope will be taken into consideration, notwithstanding your intention to conform strictly with it as expressed in the latest letter of March 2, 2009 addressed by the Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations.

Time and again, the African Group has reiterated that the relevance, legitimacy and moral authority of the United Nations will ever remain undermined if the historical injustice caused by the fact that the continent of African is not represented in the Permanent Category of the Security Council is not addressed without further delay. Africa remains the only continent that is without a permanent seat in the Security Council. Thus, we have consistently called for an enlargement of the Council in both the Permanent and Non-permanent categories with a view to making the Security Council inclusive, representative, democratic and responsive to the current geo-political realities. The status quo is no option and is unacceptable, indeed, we cannot continue like this unless something has to be done sooner than later to redress this worrying situation.

Mr. President,

The letter of the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, in his capacity as Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations is presented as an alleged synthesis of the various views on categories of membership. The African Group is of the view that it is based on premises, which would require further clarification by consultations, as it raises a number of assumptions and procedural questions, which should also be addressed. Africa will endeavour and remains ready and willing to negotiate in good faith. We trust that the other members will also do the same in the best interest of the organization.

Mr. President,

We reserve our right to intervene further in these deliberations. I wish to conclude on the note that we are not asking for much. All we need, as a continent, is a reformed and democratized Security Council capable of correcting the historical injustice resulting from the present composition of the Council by granting us not less than two permanent seats with all the prerogatives and privileges of the permanent category and five overall non-permanent seats. This, to us, is the best remedy to making the Security Council more effective, efficient and responsive to the needs of our time. We remain convinced that giving Africa adequate representation on the Council will also contribute effectively to the maintenance of international peace and security in Africa and the world over.

I thank you Mr. President.