

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



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STATEMENT

BY

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AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

OF THE

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT

THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS OF THE INFORMAL
PLENARY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON

THE CLUSTER OF SIZE OF AN ENLARGED COUNCIL AND
WORKING METHODS ON THE
QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON AND INCREASE
IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND OTHER
MATTERS RELATED TO THE COUNCIL

April 7, 2009
New York

Mr. Chairman,

I thank you for convening this session of the inter-governmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council and for giving me the floor.

The statement read on behalf of Africa by H.E. Shekou Toure, the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone who coordinates the African position on Security Council reform, is clear on what Africa considers to be the optimal size of the Security Council. Like the other African Member States who have spoken before me, I would like to align my delegation fully with Ambassador Toure's statement.

Mr. Chairman,

I am one of those who believe that we cannot hope to find a correct solution to a problem unless we asked the right questions and made the right diagnosis of the problem.

This diagnosis has been made – and I believe correctly so – by our leaders at the 2005 World Summit when they called for early reform of the Security Council, I quote: “in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions.” End of quote

Therefore, in the wisdom of our leaders – which we have no want to question – the Security Council:

- Is not as broadly representative;
- Is not as efficient as it should be;
- Is not as transparent;
- Is not very effective;
- Needs its legitimacy to be enhanced; and
- Needs to improve upon the implementation of its decisions.

These are the elements that we need to address as we discuss all the clusters of Security Council reform. Since we are now discussing the size of the reformed Security Council, the question is: Which size will make the Security Council more representative, more efficient, more transparent and enhance its effectiveness, legitimacy and implementation of its decisions?

Mr. Chairman,

It is clear that the intention of the leaders when they called for reform of the Security Council was not to create a body that will only address one, or two, of the inadequacies that they identified. A more representative Security Council would be good. A more representative Security council which is also more efficient would be better – but not enough – as long as that body is not, at the same time, more transparent, more effective, more legitimate and better able to implement its decisions.

Some among us have proposed a modest increase, not beyond a total membership of 19, others say not to exceed 21 so as not to compromise efficiency. But will such a modest increase satisfy the requirement for more representativeness as well? Certainly not.

Mr. Chairman,

The Parliament of the Republic of Zambia comprises 160 Members, representing a population of 12 million people. The Senate of the United States of America, our host, has 100 members while the House of Representatives has 465 members – representing a population of nearly 300 million people. The Peace and Security Council of the African Union has a membership of 15, representing 53 countries. The Security Council of the United Nations has 15 members, representing the 192 Member States of the United Nations, or a population of 6 billion people.

The point I am making, Mr. Chairman, is that a particular number does not, in and of itself, tell the whole story and does not prove the efficiency of one over another number. If the Parliament of Zambia, or the Senate of the United States, or the Security Council, or any other international organization, are inefficient today it is not because of, but rather inspite of, the size of its membership.

There is, therefore, no reason, no scientific or mathematical evidence, why the 26 – member Security Council proposed by Africa should be any less efficient than the 25 proposed by the Uniting for Consensus Group, or the lesser numbers proposed by other groups. Size per se is, therefore, not a sine qua non for efficiency.

Mr. Chairman,

It is our considered view that the African position contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration is the closest that the United Nations can come to reaching the delicate balance of all the elements that our leaders identified as core to the reform of the Security Council – efficiency, representativeness, transparency, effectiveness, legitimacy and capacity to implement decisions.

More than all this, the African position seeks to correct a historical injustice that has left Africa as the only region not represented in the permanent category of the Security Council membership.

We have heard, all too often, exasperated appeals and comments from colleagues imploring Africa to be flexible, to not push for a maximalist position, exercise the spirit of give and take. After all, negotiations entail give and take. We agree. However, you can give only if you have something to give, and take only if others are giving you something. But for Africa, which does not have any permanent seat in the Security Council, what can we give up? And what has anyone else given up specifically to Africa?

I am reminded, Mr. Chairman, of what one legal scholar said: "That the beauty of the Law is that it allows both the rich and the poor to sleep on the pavement!" Africa has had the freedom of the poor to remain outside of the permanent seats in the Security Council, while the others have the option to share the pavement with us but comfortable in the knowledge that should it become inclement outside, they do have a place inside.

Africa is prepared to explain, to justify and to defend each of the proposals contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration. We hope others will do the same. It will not be enough simply to state country or regional positions.

Mr. Chairman,

In my language, there is a saying which, roughly translated, means, "Wisdom usually moves from the anthill into the mountain." The presence of African and smaller states in the permanent category of the Security Council may not bring much "hard power" because we do not have the military might of the big countries. Indeed, it is not "hard power" that the Security Council needs. If anything, there is an oversupply of "hard power" in the World today. But many have been the times that our use of "hard power" alone to respond to threats of international peace and security proved inadequate. It is clear that, while the concept of "peace and security" was largely meant to be militaristic (or "hard power") in 1945, the reality of current times behoves a balance of "hard" and "soft power" to address the changed nature of current threats to international peace and security.

The presence of Africa and other smaller states in the permanent category would, without a doubt, bring a unique and vital perspective that will add to the "soft power" capacities of the Security Council. This, Mr. Chairman, is the wisdom of an anthill. And a mountain that does not listen to the anthill does not live for long.

I thank you!