Statement by
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to the United Nations

Plenary of the General Assembly

Report of the Security Council [11];
Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters [53]:
joint debate

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(Check against delivery)

Mr President,

Some time ago and within the Working Group on the Reform of the Security Council, Uruguay suggested that the Group consider new ideas for reform, given that it became clear that after so many years of consultations and unsuccessful negotiations, no agreement would be reached if we persisted on working on the same basis and same proposals than those proposed in 1993, when the Group initiated consultations.

Indeed, despite genuine efforts on the part of successive Presidents of the Group, to whom my delegation is deeply grateful, no progress has been made so far. In our view, this is due mainly to the fact that over these years, the purpose we have pursued with this exercise has lost clarity and transparency.

From the outset, the declared purpose of the reform was to adjust the composition and functioning of the Security Council to the current political realities, in order to turn this body into an instrument better equipped to respond to the present day threats to international peace and security. In order to achieve this objective, we have repeated *ad nauseam* that we must turn the Council into a more efficient, democratic and representative body.

But, Mr. President, a second objective has emerged from the wish of some countries willing to assume greater international responsibilities, to be assigned a greater role in the work of the Council and a bigger influence in all its decisions related to international peace and security.

Uruguay acknowledges the legitimacy of both objectives. We totally agree, of course, with the need to reform the structure and working methods of the Council to bring it in line with today's international realities. Furthermore, we understand the aspiration of some States that want, and are in a position, to assume greater responsibilities and who want to increase their presence and participation in the Council. But we have to be very careful with the means through which we intend to achieve these two objectives, since they might be incompatible, or indeed might interfere with each other.

The fact that we are pursuing simultaneously these two different and sometimes incompatible objectives, has made way to a number of paradoxes or contradictions. For example, while we do not stop repeating our intention to make the Council a more democratic body, some States that are working towards the second objective are seeking to increase the number of its permanent members, thus extending the right of veto, the most undemocratic of all privileges, to the new members.

On the other hand, while we emphasize the need for a more effective Security Council, some countries propose increases that would raise its membership to thirty members, which would undoubtedly affect its ability to function effectively. Such a move would accentuate the deliberative character of the Council at the expense of its executive nature, protracting negotiations that would make more difficult the path to agreements, thus weakening the content of its decisions.

Moreover, while we speak of the urgency of increasing the number of the Council members, we have refuse to move along with the one idea which would undoubtedly achieve that objective, and on which we all agree unanimously. That idea is to increase the number of non-permanent members and actually there have never been any discrepancies about this. And yet, despite this general agreement and despite the need to enlarge the membership of the Council turning it more representative and endowing it with more legitimacy, this idea has remained hostage of others infinitely more controversial and on which the possibilities to reach an agreement are remote.

This circumstance is very regrettable, because had we adopted from the beginning of the consultations an increase of, say, ten new non permanent members (amount which would probably be acceptable to everyone), in this very moment more than fifty countries would have been part of the Council, in addition to the fifty who effectively joined as non-Permanent Members.

Mr President,

We have taken note with satisfaction that new ideas have arisen lately which allow us to hope that we might finally achieve an agreement on the reform of the Council.

Uruguay has always shown great flexibility on this subject, therefore, we are ready to consider proposals for reform destined not only to increase the democratic representation of the Council, but also to satisfy the aspirations of those States willing to undertake greater responsibilities by increasing their presence and participation in the Council, provided that both, the democratic character of the body and the principle of sovereign equality of all Member States are not affected.

In this regard, we are ready to consider proposals that include a larger or more frequent presence of some of the states that may occupy the new seats in a widened Council.

In any event, the selection of these new members should take place within the context of their respective regions, paying due regard, as stated by article 23 of the Charter, to their contribution –in its broadest meaning, not only financial contribution- to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Uruguay understands that in view of the difficulties that have prevented the achievement of a general agreement after twelve years of consultations, we should change the approach to the Reform process and try to move forward gradually, by formalizing those reforms which are supported by all Member States.

Uruguay will continue to be part of the efforts undertaken to reform the Council with a flexible spirit, but always bearing in mind the need to preserve intact the principles established in the UN Charter.

Thank you.