



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Namibia to the United Nations

135 East 36th Street, New York, NY 10016

Tel: (212) 685-2003 . Fax: (212) 685- 1561 . E-mail: namibia@un.int

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. NEVILLE GERTZE

AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

**74th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

**ON THE QUESTION OF EQUITABLE
REPRESENTATION ON AND INCREASE IN THE
MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND
OTHER MATTERS RELATED TO THE COUNCIL**

**AT THE FIRST INTERGOVERNMENTAL
NEGOTIATIONS MEETING**

**NEW YORK
13 FEBRUARY 2020
(Check against delivery)**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Co-Chairs,

1. I take the floor to join colleagues in expressing our appreciation to you for convening the first Intergovernmental Negotiations on the reform of the UN Security Council in 2020. I also wish to welcome and congratulate the Co-Facilitators, the distinguished Permanent Representatives of Poland and the United Arab Emirates, on your respective appointments as Co-Facilitators of this IGN session during this all-important year of anniversaries at the United Nations. I can assure you of Namibia's support and cooperation as you steer our work during this session and I wish you both the best of luck.
2. As a member of the Committee of Ten – the Committee mandated by the African Union Assembly to advance, promote and solicit support for the African Common Position as articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration - I align my statement with the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, on behalf of the African Member States.

Co-Chairs,

3. At the start of this new session, I would like to take the opportunity to remind fellow colleagues of the principle task that remains at hand for us, the Member States of the United Nations, to accomplish: to ensure that the composition of the Security Council reflects the broader principles of equitable geographical representation, accountability and transparency that should give legitimacy and effectiveness to the decisions of the Council. This task represents one of the most challenging processes that we have ever pursued. Our resolve must not waver. Determination and commitment on the part of each and every member of this Assembly of Nations to act in the collective interest of us all is required.

Co-Chairs,

4. The Intergovernmental Negotiations began 11 years ago and while we have yet to see real negotiations take place, certain aspects of this reform process have seen real progress and changing of positions leading to the various negotiating groups having shared common positions on important aspects of the reform. I wish to highlight one of those specific areas.
5. Africa seeks through the Common African Position to redress the historic injustice of its exclusion from the permanent category of the Council. For the past 75 years, the African continent has been left behind when it comes to having its voice heard in the premier World Body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. This absence is even more flagrant today as a majority of the work of the Security Council deals with issues on the African continent. How can issues of peace and security that relate directly to our continent be discussed without our voices being at the table?
6. It would be disingenuous of me not to recognize much appreciated expressions of support for the Common African Position yet again expressed by so many Member States and interested Groups here today. In this regard, I wish to assure our colleague who requested us to inform our capitals that we have heard him loud and clear. We call on others for their support as well, as we move forward on this road to reform the Security Council. Let me assure you that using the words Common African Position would bring you the respect and admiration of 1.3 billion people on the continent of Africa. I take the opportunity to reiterate here that expressions of support for the Common African Position should refer directly to both the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration and as adopted by the African Union, which calls for *“not less than two permanent seats with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership including the right of veto; five non-permanent seats. In that regard, even though Africa is opposed in*

principle to the veto, it is of the view that so long as it exists, and as a matter of common justice, it should be made available to all permanent members of the Security Council”.

Co-Chairs,

7. In recognizing the progress that has been made in certain areas, we must also be cognizant of the fact that there is legitimate concern on the slow pace of this process. 11 years have passed since these discussions first began and we, Member States, continue to reiterate our positions on this essential matter without moving forward concretely. While recognizing the commendable work and efforts made by the previous Co-Chairs, I would like to emphasize that, we owe it to the future generations to ensure that we collectively conclude this matter.
8. His Excellency Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, in his address to the General Assembly in September 2019, made the following statement in reference to this issue: *“Next year, the 75th Anniversary will present an opportunity to conclude the reform of the United Nations Security Council. In order to reposition the Security Council to effectively address the new and emerging challenges of international peace and security, we need to conclude the Inter-Governmental Negotiation process”*. Let us endeavor to work toward concluding the IGN process.

Co-Chairs,

9. Namibia will continue to advocate for meaningful reform of the Council and remains committed to a comprehensive reform which will ensure that the historical injustice against Africa is rectified. We should not resign ourselves to the limits imposed on us by a flawed international protection system, rather we should rethink this system. As Nelson Mandela once said, may our choices reflect our hopes, not our fears.

10. I want to assure all member states that my delegation is ready to engage and looks forward to continued consultations and the eventual conclusion to this matter. I further call on all of us to redouble our efforts to work to ensure meaningful progress and deliver tangible results that will be to the benefit of all and, especially of our future generations.

I thank you.