

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Joonkook HWANG
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea
UNGA78 Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) on Security Council Reform
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Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your reappointment. You can count on my delegation's full support throughout this session as we make further progress on this critical issue, which is so closely linked to the future of the UN.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group. The core tenets of the ROK's position on the five clusters have previously been made clear:

We oppose any expansion of permanent membership, with or without veto power. However, we support the enlargement of the elected membership, following the principle of 'equitable geographical distribution.'

Therefore, the expanded non-permanent membership should reflect the increase in the UN membership by 80 countries across 5 regional groups since 1963, when the latest reform took place. In this regard, at the GA Plenary Debate of November 16th we recalled that since 1963, 31 Asia-Pacific States, 20 African and 11 GRULAC countries have joined the UN.

Having said that, I wish to share the following points that would merit further deliberation within the format of this discussion.

First, a clear distinction is needed between the principle of 'equitable geographical distribution' and the concept of 'regional representation.'

Equitable geographical distribution enshrined in Article 23 of the UN Charter is the main guidance for the election of non-permanent members. It aims to distribute seats in a fair manner across the 5 regional groups grounded in General Assembly resolutions, and should remain the main principle of the next Council expansion.

On the contrary, the concept of 'regional representation' has not yet been clearly defined or agreed among the Member States. It can be linked to the question of whether a Council Member represents the position or interests of its region other than the country itself, and whether it makes sense to allocate a permanent seat to a region instead of an individual Member State.

We note that for those regions equipped with a regional mechanism that coordinates and defines the common interests of the entire region, the

concept of 'regional representation' can be more relevant. But at least for the Asia-Pacific region, which my country belongs to, there is no such regional mechanism. Thus, it is hard to contemplate the universal application of such a concept.

Second, there needs to be more focus on striking a balance between effectiveness and representation in a reformed Security Council.

So far, delegations have put forward diverse compositions of an expanded Council membership, mostly for the sake of enhanced representation. As a result, we are now familiar with the idea of an expanded Council with Council Members numbering somewhere in the high 20s.

However, not much has been addressed at the IGN regarding the ways to preserve the functionality and efficiency of the expanded Council. This is closely linked to the cluster of 'working methods,' where the focus has largely been on enhancing transparency and the democratic nature of the Council's work thus far. Along with considerations of working methods, we may need to have a more in-depth discussion on what size Council would be manageable and workable.

Third, the question of veto remains a key issue of the IGN. The veto is the main cause of the ever-growing demands to reform the Security Council

from both within and outside the UN. Without addressing the veto, the criticisms of the Council's silence, paralysis and dysfunction in the face of threats to international peace and security will remain unanswered.

A significant number of Member States sympathize with the need to either abolish or limit the veto. Though abolition of the veto might be unrealistic at this point, it seems clear that expanding the veto – regardless of the rationale – would not improve the Council's efficiency and effectiveness.

The claims for more vetoes are often grounded on the logic of equity, but we must bear in mind our collective responsibility to make the Council operational and fit for purpose, as well as the fact that even in the event of expansion, the vast majority of Member States will still be deprived of this prerogative.

Lastly, we should start addressing the cross-regional groupings in a more comprehensive manner. There are various cross-regional entities and types of countries in special circumstances that demand better representation.

My delegation is open to in-depth consideration of special arrangements that can be made for the cross-regional groupings, either within or apart from the existing 5 regional groups. In this case, factors such as 1) the overlapping representation among existing regional groups and cross-regional entities and 2) the relevance of each cross-regional identity to the work of the Security Council should be more carefully examined.

Co-Chairs,

The discussions on the 5 clusters we had over the years at the IGN have led us toward several consensus points. But that still leaves us with the thorniest questions on our hands. My delegation reiterates that Security Council reform is critical to the future of the UN and the governance structure of international community. There are no shortcuts. We must rely on our collective wisdom to enable the Security Council to faithfully perform its responsibilities for our common good. I thank you, Co-Chairs. /END.