

**UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY – INFORMAL MEETING:
QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON AND INCREASE IN THE
MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL**

STATEMENT

BY

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman

As we understand it, this session deals predominantly with the area of working methods. As is well known, we consider this topic to be of particular importance in our comprehensive discussions of Security Council reform. We were therefore astonished to hear the view expressed in earlier discussions that working methods should not form part of this debate at all. As a long-standing member of the S5, we disagree with such statements, which are neither in accordance with resolution 62/557 nor with more than 15 years of discussion of SC reform in the General Assembly.

While the discussions on the Council's working methods are an indispensable part of our reform discussions, progress on working methods can and must be made independently of progress in the area of enlargement. Again, the history of our work illustrates this clearly: In 2006, the Security Council adopted **Presidential Note S/2006/507**, which was strongly inspired by a draft GA resolution that the S5 had tabled a few months earlier. While not going far enough in our view, Note 507 was certainly a significant step forward, indeed the most important step on this issue in a number of years. Almost three years later, however, we must state that the implementation of these measures has been inconsistent, unpredictable and almost erratic. It appears that the awareness of the contents of Note 507 has decreased significantly among Council members, and that the Secretariat – whose role is crucial in order to ensure consistent implementation – has not been very actively engaged in this respect.

While this state of play is unsatisfactory and at times frustrating, we are nevertheless committed to continuing our work in this respect, both directly with Council members who show openness in this regard and in the framework of the General Assembly, where the Security Council's constituency – the membership at large – can contribute to the discussion. We are doing our work in the firm belief that enhanced accountability, transparency and legitimacy serve the interests of the SC and contribute to its institutional standing.

Allow me a few specific comments on working methods.

The non-paper that the S5 distributed a while back contains a new measure that would deal with the question of the **use of the veto** in a constructive way: It would allow any permanent member to cast a negative vote on a proposed Council decision, while stating that such a **negative vote should not be understood as a veto**, that is, as a non-concurring vote in the sense of Article 27 (3) of the UN Charter. This would keep the controversial instrument of the veto squarely in the hands of the P5, while encouraging more serious restraint in its use. Any permanent member could thus express its opposition to a proposed decision through a "No" vote in an explicit and unambiguous manner, while at the same time

acknowledging that its opposition is not of such nature as to warrant the blocking of a decision. This could be a useful and not very difficult first step to address the demand for rules governing the use of the veto.

As far as **reporting of the SC to the GA** is concerned, we believe that concrete steps could be taken to improve this mechanism and bring it closer to the concept of accountability that the Charter provides for in its relevant parts. One such step would be an informal and interactive consideration of the report of the SC, in addition to the annual plenary debate. This could allow for a genuine exchange of views with the rest of the membership and also allow debate on issues that are not reflected in the report which is usually written in a technical rather than analytical manner.

A second positive step would be the revitalization of Article 24 (3) of the Charter, which instructs the Council to submit **special reports to the GA**, when necessary. As we all know, the Council has never considered it “necessary” to submit such special reports so far, rendering this Charter provision empty. We hope that Council members would be interested in an informal discussion on when and under what circumstances such reports could be in the interest of both the maintenance of international peace and security and an improved relationship between the SC and the General Assembly.

Finally, we wish to reiterate our view that **briefings given to the SC by senior UN officials** should always be open to all Member States, while not necessarily to the public.

Mr. Chairman

Given the limited time available, let me just refer to the documentation that the S5 have circulated earlier on as well as to the comments offered by my S5 colleagues in this debate. We believe that increased access to and participation in the work of the Council – in which some P5 members have thankfully also expressed some interest – could help our discussions on enlargement to some extent, while illustrating the need for a viable and sustainable enlargement formula even further. Liechtenstein, as a small country, has little at stake in a reform process that leads to nothing more than an enlarged Council, doing business as usual, in which our hypothetical chances of serving as a member are improved from “maybe once in 150 years” to “maybe once in 100 years”. We attach importance to a Security Council to which we have access as a non-member, in which we can present our interests when needed, and which works genuinely and in an accountable fashion on behalf of the entire membership.

I thank you.