



Joint Benelux statement at the UN Security Council high-level debate “Maintenance of International Peace and Security : Addressing the Historical Injustice and Enhancing Africa’s Effective Representation in the UN Security Council”

**Delivered by H.E. Mr. Olivier Maes
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the UN**

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Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Benelux countries, Belgium, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and my own country, Luxembourg. We thank the Sierra Leone Presidency for convening this debate and inviting us to participate.

The Benelux countries are proud of their close partnership with African States and strongly support Africa’s leadership in advancing peace and security, human rights and sustainable development.

We also commend the pivotal role played by African Union-led peace support operations and pay tribute to the African troops in peace operations, both on the African continent and across the globe.

We recognize the legitimate aspirations of the African countries to play their rightful role on the global stage, including through an increased presence in the Security Council. A key step to achieve this objective is to ensure a comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council. Such reform is needed to make the Council more representative, democratic, transparent, accountable, and effective.

Mr. President,

I would like to highlight the following four central elements of the Benelux countries’ position on the reform of the UN Security Council:

- First. Any enlarged Council should be more representative of today’s world and in particular reflect the legitimate aspirations of the African countries. In addition, we support an increased representation of developing countries and small-and medium sized Member States, including Small Island Developing States.
- Second. The Benelux countries favor an enlargement in both the permanent and non-permanent membership categories. We support permanent African representation. The exact size of the enlarged Council should emerge from discussions between Member States on the key issues of ‘categories of membership’ and ‘regional representation’.

- Third. The question of the veto is a key element of UN Security Council reform. The use of the veto has often prevented the Security Council from effectively fulfilling its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Special consideration should be given to address ways to limit the use of the veto. All Members of the Security Council must adhere to article 27.3 of the UN Charter, which stipulates that a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting. We must thoroughly consider and discuss the potential adverse impact of additional veto powers on the functioning of a future expanded Security Council and the overall effectiveness of the Council.
- Fourth. The working methods of the Council must be improved to ensure greater accountability and transparency. The Council's relationship with the General Assembly must be further strengthened. Elected members must play an even bigger role, including as penholders. More frequent field visits by the Security Council and Sanctions Committees can foster a better understanding and cooperation. We also welcome the enhanced consultations between the Security Council and troop- and police-contributing countries and the strengthened cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union's Peace and Security Council.

In closing, the upcoming Summit of the Future presents an opportunity to translate aspirations into concrete actions. We need an ambitious and action-oriented contribution of the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) process to the Pact for the Future. There is very broad convergence on the principles of the reform. In order to achieve meaningful progress towards a comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council, we need to start text-based negotiations within a fixed timeframe. We look forward to the presentation of Africa's reform model at the IGN and stand ready to work towards a consolidated reform model that meets the expectations of the African States and the wider UN Membership.

Mr. President, you can count on the Benelux countries' support to redress the imbalance in the UN Security Council and to ensure an equitable representation for Africa.

I thank you.