

# Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) on Security Council reform

New York, 22 January 2024

## Statement by Belgium on behalf of the Benelux countries (Belgium -- Luxembourg -- the Netherlands)

### The Mexican model

Excellencies, Co-Chairs,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Benelux countries, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Luxembourg and my own country, Belgium.

At the outset, allow me to extend our appreciation to Ambassador Albanai and Ambassador Marschik, Co-Chairs of the IGN, for convening this meeting. We welcome the Co-Chairs' initiative to hold structured dialogues on reform models proposed by States and Groups and are hopeful that this innovative approach will contribute to fostering convergences and will enable text-based negotiations which in our view are a prerequisite for progress toward a comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

We also extend our gratitude to the States and Groups that have already submitted a reform model. The Benelux countries stand ready to engage constructively and look forward to a fruitful discussion on the presented models.

We welcome the detailed presentation by the distinguished Ambassador of **Mexico**. We agree with the overall objective outlined in the Mexican model that the reform of the Security Council is needed to make it more representative, democratic, transparent, accountable and effective. In addition, we would like to share the following four points:

- **First, on the categories of membership;** the Mexican model proposes an enlargement only in the non-permanent category, whereas the Benelux countries are in favour of a limited expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent

membership categories with the exact number to emerge from discussions between Member States on the key issues of 'categories of membership' and 'regional representation'. However, we would also be open to consider the possibility of longer term non-permanent seats should this proposal form a basis for a compromise between the various groups.

- **Second, on regional representation**, the Benelux countries believe that any enlarged Security Council should be more representative of today's world and in particular reflect the legitimate aspirations of the African Group. In addition, we support an increased representation of developing countries and small- and medium-sized Member States, including Small Island Developing States in the Security Council.
- **Third, on the question of the veto**: 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. We fully agree with the assertion in the Mexican model that special consideration should be given to address ways to best limit the use of the veto. In particular, the Benelux countries strongly support the political declaration on the suspension of veto powers in cases of mass atrocities, presented by France and Mexico, as well as the Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, developed by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group. In the same vein, we believe that 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". Furthermore, we believe that the potential adverse impact of additional veto powers on the functioning of a future expanded Security Council must be thoroughly considered and discussed.
- **Fourth, on the working methods and the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly**, the Benelux countries see merits in various elements listed in the Mexican model, and we agree with the assertion that inclusive and transparent decision-making processes should be key aspects of any reformed Security Council. In our view, the guiding principle should be that an enlarged Council should not make it more

difficult for non-permanent members to actively contribute to the work of the Council. We agree that all elected members should have the possibility to chair subsidiary bodies and to serve as penholder or co-penholder of files during their term on the Council. We also believe that the Security Council should be invited to consider taking measures to ensure that non-permanent members of the enlarged Security Council hold the Presidency of the Council at least once during their tenure. In addition to the elements listed in the Mexican model, it is important to acknowledge that while the Security Council remains the principal organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly must be mutually reinforcing and complementary. We believe the General Assembly has a political responsibility to address situations where the use of the veto leads to paralysis in the decision-making of the Security Council. Any permanent member using the veto should be held accountable, that is why we have supported the veto initiative launched by Liechtenstein which in our view has introduced a welcome change in the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Before concluding, we also wanted to ask a question. The Mexican model proposes an expansion only in the category of the non-permanent members. The Council should be more representative of today's world. How can an expansion in only the category of the non-permanent seats accommodate the legitimate aspirations of some countries and regions, for example Africa?

Co-Chairs, I would like to conclude by reiterating the readiness of the Benelux countries to help move the reform of the Security Council forward and to foster convergences between the different reform models proposed by States and Groups.

Thank you.