

Making the Security Council better reflect the twenty-first century

Mr President,

At the outset, let me congratulate Ambassador Joanna Wronecka of Poland and Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani on their recent appointment as Co-Facilitators of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council reform. We are grateful to them for taking up this important responsibility and look forward to working with them closely this session.

The United Kingdom's strong support for Security Council reform is long-standing and our position is well-known.

The United Kingdom supports modest expansion of the Security Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories.

We support the creation of new permanent seats for India, Germany, Japan and Brazil, as well as permanent African representation on the Council.

We also support a modest expansion of the non-permanent category of membership, taking the Security Council's total membership to somewhere in the mid-twenties.

These changes, we believe, would enable the Security Council to better reflect the twenty-first century and the world as it is today, 75 years on from the United Nations' founding.

It would make for a more representative Security Council, better able to address challenges to international peace and security by drawing on the perspectives and the expertise of a wider range of the UN membership.

And it is a model for reform that would preserve for the Council its ability to respond nimbly and decisively to threats around the globe.

Mr President,

On the question of the veto, the United Kingdom has long maintained that disagreement in this area should not prevent progress in other areas where reform is possible.

For our own part, it is well-known that the United Kingdom has refrained from using the veto since 1989 – over three decades ago. As supporters of the Accountability Coherence and Transparency group Code of Conduct, we remain committed never to vetoing a credible draft resolution preventing or ending a mass atrocity, and encourage all States, including other permanent members of the Security Council, to join with us in this regard.

Mr President,

Before concluding, I will turn briefly to the upcoming Intergovernmental Negotiations of this session.

We continue to believe that the Intergovernmental Negotiations process is a valuable mechanism for Member States to take the discussion on Security Council reform forwards.

Nevertheless, as we set out in this debate last year, we continue to sympathise with those Member States that express concern and frustration over the lack of progress that has been made to date.

We remain open, as before, to all ideas for moving the process forward at an accelerated rate, including by formalising and recording the Intergovernmental Negotiations or by moving to text-based negotiations.

Finally, Mr President, as you noted in your letter of 30 October the last session's meetings were unexpectedly curtailed because of measures put in place to mitigate the Covid-19 pandemic.

During this session, we are open to all options that would allow us to work around the pandemic, including by participating in virtual meetings if that is required.

Mr President,

In the Declaration on the Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, we committed to "instil new life" into our efforts to reform the Security Council. We look forward to working this year to fulfilling that commitment.

Thank you.