



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

866 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017, Phone: (212) 222-4300, www.un.int/japan/

Statement by H.E. Mr. Yukio Takasu

Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations
At the Open-ended Working Group
on the Question of Equitable Representation on
and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council
and Other Matters related to the Security Council

New York, 10 April 2008

Mr. President,

As Japan attaches the utmost importance to the early realization of Security Council reform, we are deeply grateful to you for your strong interest in the reform of the Security Council and for convening this meeting today.

At the last meeting of the Open-ended Working Group held on 14 December 2007, the broadly held view was expressed that the status quo on the composition of the Security Council, which was established at the birth of the UN and revised only once, more than 40 years ago, is no longer acceptable to meet today's challenges. It is incumbent upon us, representing Member States and responsible for creating an effective global organization in the next generation to achieve an appropriate reform as soon as possible to reflect the reality of the 21st century. In closing that meeting, you emphasized that it will be up to Member States to identify and put forward a document for consideration by the Task Force that could serve as a basis for intergovernmental negotiations.

Since then, nearly four months have passed during this period, and there have been active discussions among interested Member States to meet your call. Japan welcomes the opportunity today to present our view on the framework, modality and negotiables for the forthcoming intergovernmental negotiations.

(Framework)

1) In considering the framework of intergovernmental negotiations, the guiding principle governing our work should be the decision 61.561 adopted in the last session of the General Assembly on 17 September 2007.

The General Assembly decided that the Security Council reform issue should be considered during the 62nd session so that further concrete results may be achieved, including through intergovernmental negotiations, building on the progress achieved so far, particularly at the 61st session (i.e., "an intermediary solution" on the basis of variations in the facilitators' report as referred to in the Italian letter) as well as the positions of and the proposals made by Member States.

2) The basic position of Japan is that the Security Council must be reformed through changes that include expansion of the permanent category, so that the Council will reflect the reality of international society in the twenty-first century and will be able to function more effectively. While views on the appropriate number and distribution of new permanent members may vary among Member States, an overwhelming number of Member States support the expansion of the permanent category.

3) Therefore, the expansion of the permanent category must be included as an option in any paper that is to serve as a basis to start such negotiations.

4) Among the letters provided by you, the paper presented with the letter from the Ambassador of Cyprus is the only one which specifies elements of negotiables with options, such as the size of an enlarged Council, categories of membership, procedures for electing new

members, review and working methods. I understand that the paper was carefully drafted by ambassadors from six countries working together voluntarily in the general interest of Member States and in response to your call on 14 December 2007 in order to produce a compromise basis for intergovernmental negotiations. The paper does not contain in full and in every detail the positions and the proposals of the major groups, but does incorporate the core elements of the respective positions of such groups as the G4, African Group and UFC as options for negotiations. It does not set preconditions nor prejudge the outcome of the negotiations at the starting point. On the contrary, it safeguards the core positions of each group, and Member States will have ample opportunity to make the case for their positions and engage in serious negotiations with other countries. Only this way will a genuine give-and-take process of negotiations be possible.

As I said, the Cyprus paper does not satisfy all preferences comprising Japan's position, but it can serve as a basis for our entering into intergovernmental negotiations, because its core position, the expansion of the permanent category, is included as one of the options presented. Japan would like to urge other Member States to seriously consider using this paper as a basis for the negotiations.

(Modality)

With regard to the modality for intergovernmental negotiations, no doubt it should be an inclusive and transparent process. But as regards the exact format of the negotiation process, we should be pragmatic and flexible, understanding that there are various possible configurations, both formal and informal, as appropriate for conducting and advancing the process of negotiations at an ambassadorial level in the UN. The idea that such negotiations should take place only at the OEWG is too restrictive.

(Timing)

In order for the General Assembly to fulfill the task that it entrusted to itself in the decision 61/561, it must achieve concrete results in intergovernmental negotiations before the end of the 62nd session. For that to happen, we should proceed through the next stage of the reform with a sense of urgency, and the negotiation process must start as early as possible. Japan, therefore, respectfully requests you, Mr. President, to take the initiative and prepare to begin the negotiation process by the end of this April, so that we can achieve concrete results during the current session. We urge you and the Task Force members to make all possible efforts to facilitate the advancement of the negotiation process. Japan is ready to work constructively and intensively for an early realization of Security Council reform.