



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

828 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 • TEL. (212) 953-9130 • FAX (212) 697-1970

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STATEMENT

BY

AMBASSADOR SIMEON A. ADEKANYE
AMBASSADOR/DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
NIGERIA

AT

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLENARY MEETING

ON

AGENDA ITEMS 117 AND 120:

***QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON AND
INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL
AND RELATED MATTERS; FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF
THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT***

NEW YORK, 20 JULY 2006

Mr. President,

On behalf of the delegation of Nigeria, I have the honour to express our gratitude to you for scheduling this General Assembly debate on the Question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, as well as the Follow up to the Outcome of the Millennium Summit. This coincides with Nigeria's expectations that the Security Council reform would not be permanently deferred. Indeed, this is also consistent with the decision of our leaders in September 2005.

Mr. President,

It has always been the view of Nigeria that the reform of the United Nations would not be complete without the fundamental reform and increase in the size and the composition of the Security Council. Moreover, such a reform should accommodate the legitimate claim of Africa to representation on the Council in the permanent membership category. We believe that such an outcome would reflect the new realities and thereby enable the Council to gain in stature and credibility as well as ensure that its decisions attract wider support of the international community.

Africa's position on the Security Council reform has been defined in the decisions taken by African Heads of State and Government at the Fifth and Sixth Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly of the African Union in Sirte in July 2005 and Khartoum in January 2006. The fact is that the issues raised in the Security Council reform for which we have canvassed over the years and in the past months remain clear. Just as the General Assembly took the decision to establish the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, the time is ripe to act decisively on Security Council reform. It would do a great disservice to our Organization if Member States continue to prevaricate on this matter.

Mr. President,

Nigeria respects the viewpoints of those Member States who insist on the need for consensus before such a decision is taken. However, we equally recognize that, in the greater national interest of our respective peoples, we rarely allow the search for consensus to inhibit important decisions. It is essential, therefore, that in the interest of and for the future of our organization we should exert every effort to bring all members onboard on this issue without losing sight of our primary goal. This may well entail some element of flexibility but flexibility informed by a shared view that the Council reform, in all its aspects is long overdue. If we proceed along that path, Nigeria is confident that we should, in the immediate future, achieve that goal and thereby not only rekindle the hopes and confidence of mankind in the United Nations, but also prove wrong its few vocal critics who wrongly argue that Member States individually and collectively cannot rise to the challenges of true multilateralism. Let us send forth from this hallowed hall a clear message of our common resolve not to let slip yet another opportunity to address this matter once and for all.

There are also those who believe that Member States of this Organization should be content with merely tinkering with the working methods of the Security Council and that this would better serve the interest of the broad membership. Although the full implications of such a position for the overall UN reform have been the subject of discussions in informal consultations in the past, Nigeria considers it necessary to restate that this approach would hardly address the fundamental inequity that the Council, as currently constituted, represents.

Mr. President,

I wish to recall that it was against the forgoing that Nigeria, last December, resubmitted on behalf of Africa, the African Draft Resolution on the Security Council reform. For us, the reform of the Security Council should bring gains to all regions. It should also

address the fundamental imbalance in the Council's composition. In the pursuit of that objective, Nigeria maintains an open mind. We remain open to negotiations but, for such negotiations to bear fruit, they must be based on the recognition of the fundamental view that, as the only region without representative in the permanent membership category of the Security Council, Africa's legitimate aspirations should be addressed. Nigeria, therefore, identifies with those Member States whose initiatives boldly and largely take into account Africa's primary interest and concerns on the Security Council reform.

I thank you.