STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Vandi Chidi Minah
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and

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for and on behalf of the African Group

at

the Meeting of the General Assembly Plenary on the Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

New York, Wednesday November 12, 2014

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Mr. President,

It is an honour for me to speak on behalf of the African Group at this Debate on General Assembly Items 119 Question of the Equitable Representation on the Increase in the membership of the Security Council and Related Matter.

For us, this debate provides a welcoming opportunity to take stock of the recently concluded ten rounds of the inter-governmental negotiations and to set the stage for the next phase, this time round hopefully targeted to move the process in a more meaningful direction guided towards text base negotiations.

A reformed Security Council must conform to the principles of equitable geographical distribution as well as maintaining the balance in its relationship with this Assembly as envisaged in the Charter.

Mr. President,

Since the adoption of Decision 62/557 of 15th September 2008, the reform process has cautiously forged on albeit at a pace not to our liking; but delegations have remained remarkably engaged with interest. Convergences, divergences and possible sticky areas are now very well known. This, in our view, is a commendable point of departure.

By now we believe that the positions of the various groups and member states have been stated and restated during the many exchanges of the ten rounds held.

It is therefore our hope that the spirit of an effective interactive approach focusing on the negotiation text during this session will dictate the pace of the process.

Mr. President,

The African Group has consistently reiterated the imperative of comprehensively reforming the Security Council to address the historical injustice that leaves Africa as the only continent that is not represented in the permanent category of the Security Council and under-represented in the non-permanent category.

Paradoxically, this organ devotes 70 percent of its time dealing with issues directly and sometimes exclusively affecting the continent, which also provides over a quarter of the membership of the United Nations.

Accordingly, Africa’s common position, as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration, is in principle opposed to the veto, but as long as this right exists, and as a matter of common justice, it should be made available to all permanent members of the Security Council. Africa Therefore request, for its representation in the Security Council with no less than two permanent seats, with all prerogatives and privileges of the permanent membership, including the
right of veto, and five non-permanent seats; with the African Union being credited the responsibility for the selection of Africa’s candidates.

Mr. President,

As a Group, we have always expressed reservations about the process of the negotiations itself, which in a way, seems not being driven by the proposals and positions of member states as required by Decision 62/557. We have nonetheless steadfastly in a spirit of goodwill, continued to be engaged and committed to negotiate in good faith and with mutual trust.

The sense of the house during the last ten rounds was that a good majority of delegations were in favor of an expansion in both categories. Clearly, some P-5 members expressed support for the candidacies of a select few member states and African representation to become permanent members of the Security Council.

The African Group and CARICOM, the L-69 group, some member states of Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe, as well as other delegations, also expressed support for expansion in the two categories. Furthermore, there was considerable support for the inclusion of small and medium size states and of course and enhanced African representation in an expanded Security Council.

There is no doubt that though the past exchanges were interactive and interrogative in essence, actual negotiations have really not begun. At this stage, a work plan, a timeline for negotiations and the modalities by which agreements on given issues will be reflected in a text for subsequent adoption by the General Assembly is of critical necessity. Only real negotiations will lead to real reform.

We reiterate our resolve to continue to work towards building alliances and narrowing down differences with other delegations and interest groups. We particularly want to underscore the progressive and encouraging consultations on-going between the C-10 of the African group, the L-69 and CARICOM.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, Africa stands ready and willing to continue to engage in good faith and with mutual trust in the intergovernmental negotiations in the informal plenary of the General Assembly in this current session. The African group looks forward to the commencement of real negotiations after a preliminary agreement on the principles and substance regarding the issue of equitable geographical representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

We remain open to the positions of other delegations, and we will continue to endeavor to reach out to all Member States in order to garner the widest possible political acceptance of our position. We also remain open to work together with any other group or delegation. Any such group must take into account the level
of momentum and support the Common African Position has so far gained and continues to gain. The African remain faithful to the provisions of Decision 62/557 and subsequent Decisions. We therefore hope that an acceptable outcome on the reform issue will be forthcoming this session. We assure you Mr. President of our continued support and constructive participation towards the attainment of our common goal in reforming the Security Council to be more representative, accountable, democratic, transparent and efficient.

I thank you for your kind attention.