Statement

by

His Excellency Mr. Norachit Sinhaseni

Ambassador and Permanent Representative

of Thailand to the United Nations

at the 49th General Assembly Plenary Meeting

under Item 119:

Questions of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the
Membership of the Security Council and Related Matters

New York, 12 November 2014
Mr. President,

Next year marks the 10th anniversary of the World Summit where the leaders called for an early reform of the Security Council. It also marks the 50th anniversary of the entry-into-force of the Charter amendment on 31 August 1965, which led to the expansion of the Security Council from 11 to 15 with the increase in non-permanent members from 6 to 10. As we all know, this amendment was made in response to an increase in the UN membership from 51 in 1945 to 115 in 1963. Now there are 193 members and it is possible that the number could increase.

With the large increase in the membership and the tremendous changes in global geo-political and geo-economic landscape since the inception of the United Nations in 1945, we all agreed to the reform of the UNSC in five areas as mandated by GA decision 62/557 in 2008 to bring the Council in line with present day reality.

After two decades of negotiations, first under the Ad Hoc Working Group and later under the Intergovernmental Negotiation, we should be in a position to reach a consensus on all these five areas.

- On the categories of membership, there is no objection to the expansion of non-permanent members, there remains, however, different views on the expansion of permanent members.
- On the question of the veto, there appears to be growing support for the so-called code of conduct proposed by France, instead of an outright abolition of the veto, which is highly unlikely, if not impossible.
- On regional representation, there is a clear consensus on equitable regional representation.
- On the size of an enlarged Security Council, there seems to be a convergence of view that an enlarged Council should be in the mid-twenties. On improving the working methods of the Council, there is no objection to the working methods being improved either before or after the reform. In fact, improving the Council’s working methods should be an on-going process that should not be held hostage to the overall reform of the Council.
- On the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, I believe that we all agree that these two principle organs of the United Nations should work in unison in accordance with their respective mandates given in the Charter.

Mr. President,
The only issue that seems to be holding back the much-needed reform of the Security Council is the expansion of the permanent members. On this issue, Thailand has always been open to all ideas or proposals, including the expansion of both categories of membership or the introduction of the so-call interim or intermediate options.

We share the view of a number of Member States that reform can only be possible if Member States are willing to be more flexible and are prepared to engage in a give-and-take negotiation. We are also receptive to the proposal of having a text-based negotiation. However, before embarking upon drafting any text, all must first agree on the principle and the possible way forward, especially on the most important issue of increasing the number of permanent members.
Mr. President,
In our view, it would be very difficult to reach a consensus on the increase in the number of permanent members at least in the immediate future due to firm opposition of certain Member States, which are skeptical of the need to add more permanent seats to the Council. However, it does not mean that such expansion will be not possible in the long term. Countries that wish to become new permanent members must prove that they have both the capacity and commitment to strengthen the Council, while the wider membership has the right to evaluate whether the addition of new permanent members has any proven merit.

Unlike the current five permanent members that were given permanent seats because of their historical contribution in bringing an end to the Second World War and subsequently establishing a new international organization known today as the United Nations, the new permanent members should be given permanent seats if they can clearly demonstrate their capacity and commitment in maintaining international peace and security. And more importantly the expansion of permanent members must prove to be useful in enhancing the Council's efficiency and effectiveness.

In order to give the aspiring permanent members the opportunity to demonstrate their capacity and commitment, an interim category of membership should be introduced to allow them to serve the Council for 3-5 years, based on conditions and criteria to be established. If they were re-elected for a second term, then there could be a review during or after the second term on the possible expansion of permanent members. However, the introduction of these interim seats should not affect the expansion of non-permanent members based on the principle of equitable regional representation.

Mr. President,
As we will soon be marking the 70th anniversary of the United Nations and the 10th anniversary of the World Summit, Member States should work together in the spirit of compromise and flexibility to ensure that the forthcoming 11th round of negotiation under the IGN will produce tangible results and make progress. We need a fresh approach and many new ideas and proposals in order to move the reform forward. Repetition of known positions leads us to nowhere.

The ideas Thailand puts forward in the General Assembly today is aimed at breaking the deadlock by taking on board all the concerns and proposals from all sides that are either for or against the expansion of the permanent seats so as to achieve the much-needed reform of the Security Council that is acceptable to all.

Thank you Mr. President

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