



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

866 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017 Phone: (212) 223-4300 - www.un.int/japan/

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Statement by H. E. Mr. Kenzo Oshima
Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations
At the Plenary of the General Assembly
On Agenda Items:

- 117: Question of equitable representation on the increase in the membership
of the Security Council and related matters
and
120: Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Mr. President,

I would like to thank you for convening today's plenary meeting. As President Eliasson has continued to emphasize, reflecting the general view and sentiment of delegations, early reform of the Security Council is an essential element in our overall efforts to reform our Organization. In our view the time for action is long overdue.

Our intensive follow-up work on the Outcome Document of the World Summit has produced some significant results of which we should be proud. We have launched the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, and adopted the implementing resolution on development; we have achieved partial success on management reform. While further work is necessary on other areas such as mandate review, it is clear Security Council reform stands out the key unfinished institutional reform which we must now be ready to assault for a solution.

In light of this, today's meeting is timely. It provides a good opportunity to review where we stand, to reaffirm the significance of the issue, and to exchange frank views on the way forward. It is again pertinent to recall what Secretary-General Kofi Annan and many others have repeated: no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council.

Mr. President,

As we all know, there are two clusters of issues in Security Council reform – improvement of the

working methods of the Council and the expansion of its membership.

First, on the working methods, the draft resolution presented by the G4 countries last year contained specific provisions in this area. The S5 draft resolution submitted in March this year by five countries proposes more ambitious measures. My delegation acknowledges that the S5 draft resolution captured wide attention of the Member States seeking improvement of the working methods of the Security Council.

Another development on the working methods issue is the actual work done within the Security Council through its subsidiary body – the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

In my capacity as the Chair of this Working Group, I wish to report, here and now, on behalf of the Security Council members on the achievements made so far on the joint work to improve the working methods in the Security Council:

“The Security Council adopted on 19 July 2006, a Note by the President concerning the improvement of the working methods of the Council. The Note is the product of intensive work on the part of the Security Council’s Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions over the past several months. Members of the Council have been actively engaged in these efforts to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council’s work as well as its interaction and dialogue with non-Council members, as part of the follow-up to the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit. Members of the Council have committed themselves to implementing the measures set out in the Note. The members of the Security Council will continue to consider ways to improve the working methods of the Council through the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions”.

I would like to add that the Note contains in a consolidated document those specific and concrete measures which have been newly agreed this time and those relevant rules, practices and understandings which have been agreed previously and put into in practice since 1993. The said Note by the President of the Security Council will be distributed shortly as an official document of the United Nations(S/2006/507).

Speaking now in my national capacity, we regard the Note as a modest but meaningful first step by the Council in the direction of improving its working methods. As the Chair of the Working Group until the end of the year, I will continue to work with other members in the Council to pursue further improvement of its working methods, in the implementation of paragraph 154 of the Outcome Document concerning working methods.

Mr. President,

Secondly, on the question of expansion of the membership, we acknowledge that there still exist differences of positions as regards the size, scope and modalities of expansion. In order to actually achieve Security Council reform, we need to develop a concrete proposal that overcomes some of these differences and thus is capable of garnering greater support than that afforded the G4 draft resolution of last year. To this end, while deeply appreciating the support of countries for the G4 draft, Japan has been conducting a series of intensive consultations with many interested Member States, including those who publicly opposed the G4 draft resolution last year.

Japan continues to maintain the cooperation framework of the G4. At this juncture, we are not yet able to offer any new proposal or specific modification to original G4 proposal. Nonetheless we are determined to continue our efforts, believing that the time is approaching to re-start the process of serious negotiations with a view to reaching a solution.

In the meantime, the issue of Security Council reform continues to be discussed by various groups and countries, including most recently by the African Member States on the occasion of the African Union summit held in Banjul, Gambia. Although nothing new seems to have come out of the Banjul summit meeting, we note that African states remain seized of the matter at the level of the heads of state. We hope the time will soon come when all member states on all sides, African states as well as other states with important stakes in this issue, will begin to move actively and positively, with open-mindedness, flexibility and realism, in search of a solution that can enjoy broad support of the membership.

Earlier this year, Prime Minister Koizumi stated in his policy statement at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa:

“We must realize UN Security Council reform without delay, so that the African voice is heard more in the Security Council. We would like to strengthen collaboration with our African colleagues to this end.”

More recently we have also heard other leaders speak on this issue. We have noted with interest the remarks made by Prime Minister Blair of Britain in his speech at Georgetown University on the matter. In a recent joint communiqué, the United Kingdom and France expressed their continued support for Brazil, Germany, India and Japan as future Permanent Members, as well as permanent seats for Africa. Japan is grateful for this statement of their position. On 29 June 2006, Prime Minister Koizumi and President Bush issued a joint document where the both leaders stated on the matter:

“Japan and the United States will intensify their cooperation, and work together in realizing Japan’s permanent membership at the Security Council”.

Japan is grateful to the United States for this strong support.

Those including G4 countries and their co-sponsors and supporters have argued that Security Council reform should be achieved in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. On the basis of this idea, which enjoys the support of quite a significant number of Member States, we intend to continue dialogue and constructive discussions with other interested states. The outcome of the accelerated progress should be a Security Council that is more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, with enhanced effectiveness and legitimacy.

Mr. President,

We fear that if the political will for reform wanes, so too will diminish the supports given to our Organization itself. There must be a proposal that is actionable and can enjoy a broad-based support of Member States. I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to those who have expressed their precious support for Japan. At the same time, we call on those Member States that support Security Council reform to work together with us to that end. We appeal to all Member States to give new impetus to the debate on Security Council reform. We ask you to reflect on constructive and perhaps creative ways for accelerating progress.

Building on the experiences gained during the 60th session, we should carry on and continue our deliberations with greater vigor in the 61st session, firm in the belief that the time is more than ripe for an important decision on this crucial matter.

Thank you, Mr. President.