

25 November 2019



Permanent Mission
of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the United Nations
New York

Statement

by

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to the United Nations**

at the General Assembly

25 November 2019

(Check against delivery)

Thank you, Mister President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the G4 today.

There have been many G4 statements before this one. I am starting to feel like Sheherazade in “The 1001 Nights”, but her tales were clearly more exciting and colourful than ours. She would not have survived dawn by asking for text-based negotiations and the extension of membership in both categories.

We are not Sheherazade, but underperforming on our task comes with a high price, too: by procrastinating on the reform of the Security Council, we risk this body to lose its authority and the legitimacy of its decisions. And just in case “procrastination” sounds too harsh: we have been stuck in this process for decades now, with the only change being in the name of the format. Contrary to the old German fable of the Tortoise and the Hare which taught us that “slow and steady wins the race”, we find ourselves not one step closer to the finish line than we were last year or even several years ago.

To this day, we have proven incapable of reforming the UN’s principal organ for maintaining international peace and security. To this day, we have not succeeded in getting closer to text-based negotiations despite an overwhelming majority of UN Member States asking for them. So far, we have collectively failed to address one of the most relevant issues in the multilateral system today. Defending the multilateral system on Sundays and then blocking the reform of one of its central organs from Monday to Saturday will not do the trick any longer.

In order to enable progress, we need a concise negotiating text that will allow us to finally start concrete, results-oriented negotiations. The G4 will continue its engagement with other reform-minded countries and groups in order to make substantive progress.

Over time, the IGN has appeared less and less capable of moving beyond the mere repetition of well-known positions. Much like Little Red Riding Hood, we have been repeatedly and collectively led off the path by those who do not want us to reach our goal. We cannot waste any more time picking flowers in the meadows while grandmother is at risk of being devoured.

The IGN's quest for consensus allows a select few members of this General Assembly to successfully put a spoke in the wheel of Security Council reform. But those who prefer moving in circles rather than in a linear fashion owe the rest of us a convincing answer to the question of how they want to ensure that the Security Council is equipped to deal with the complex challenges the world faces today on questions of international peace and security.

G4 Ministers stressed in September that an expansion of the Security Council in both categories is indispensable to making this body more representative, legitimate and effective.

Only if we manage to reform the Security Council will we stop it from becoming obsolete. Broader membership of the Security Council – especially with increased and enhanced representation of Africa – will allow it to preserve its credibility and create the political backing needed for the peaceful resolution of today's international crises. This has been recognised on many occasions, including for the first time, at the Summit of the Non Aligned Movement earlier this year. We express our support for adequately reflecting the African Common Position, as contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

A large majority of Member States would like to see Council reformed. The time to act is now. Those who are willing to make progress need to push the reform process further along its way, including by showing some flexibility.

What we need is a representative UN Security Council to help us restore confidence in international cooperation and global governance – especially in these testing times. We can find our way if we do not continue to drop breadcrumbs that are eaten by the birds, and instead finally use little stones to guide us through the forest. It's easy: just put what we have into a text.

Let me finish by saying that we look forward to working together in this 74th UN General Assembly session with the new co-Chairs of the Intergovernmental Negotiations and with all of you on advancing these issues ahead of the UN's 75th anniversary in 2020. We sincerely hope that you, Mr President, will appoint co-chairs as early as possible. We are ready to work with you, Mr President, on finding ways to allow a speedy resumption of the IGN's work. We shouldn't lose any more

valuable time. We need a strong, legitimate United Nations that can help us restore confidence in global governance and cooperation.

Together with you, we are willing to give the IGN a last chance despite its constraints and flawed working methods. Once the co-chairs are nominated, we can start the discussions in the IGN straightaway, just after today's debate. We don't have to end our discussions in May as we were forced to do in the last session. We can discuss till July and even into September.

The IGN should be guided by the decision-making requirements and working methods laid out in the Charter of the United Nations and in the rules and procedures of the General Assembly. UN Member States rightfully expect it to be a more results-oriented process. We have two documents at hand: the 69th session's document and last session's paper. Let us use these two documents to create the text for negotiations.

Over the last decade in the IGN, we have called out all the names we could think of to break the spell that forced us to go in circles. It is time we arrived at saying "Rumpelstiltskin".

Thank you.