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Sustaining the Momentum for UN Security Council Reform Amidst a Dynamic Global Geopolitical Context

Over the past few years, reform of the multilateral system has gained momentum, as international peace and security face historic crises with the proliferation of wars and grave breaches of international norms with impunity and sustainable development goals get derailed in the face of rising poverty and inequality, as well as inadequate provision for and lack of access to development finance. Apart from the international financial institutions, one of the key bodies for advancing the agenda of the reform of the multilateral system has been the UN Security Council (UNSC).

The enthusiasm and the progress towards a breakthrough in the long quest for the UNSC reform that was visible during the “Summit of the Future” in September 2024 have continued to reverberate, despite facing a setback. Since that time, a change in the United States administration to President Donald Trump may have implications for the trajectory of discussions on the reform of the UN Security Council. However, such political transitions neither alter the urgent need for reform nor do they negate the momentum that has been built through sustained international engagement.

The conditions that necessitate and make reform compelling are growing, not lessening. The failure of the UNSC to mobilise an effective response to the conflicts in Sudan, Gaza and Ukraine, among others, and the unprecedented level of resort to the use of veto power of some permanent members in recent years continues to underscore the pressing need for UNSC reform. As the UN Secretary General’s High-Level Panel put it, ‘[t]oday’s Security Council is the highest profile example of failure in the multilateral system. Dominated by a small number of States and hampered by geopolitical polarization, it has proven itself unable to respond to major risks to international peace and security.’ Apart from the inconsistency and double standard in the UNSC’s response that brought it into disrepute, what has rendered the UNSC in its current form unfit for purpose is the lack of shared perception of the threats to international peace and security and the tendency of using the UNSC for geopolitical score settling. Additionally, it is widely recognized that the UNSC, as a relic of the disappearing post WWII power relations, is out of sync with the contemporary distribution of power and the major shifts that the global organization experienced during the past 80 years.

Both ensuring what the New Agenda for Peace calls ‘universality’ and hence the consistent application of the UN Charter and international law rules and reducing the gridlock paralyzing the Council require making the Council fit for the emerging multipolar world. These requirements and the changes in the geopolitical dynamics of the world demand the restructuring of the membership of the Council by both making the Council reflect the contemporary distribution of power and bringing in parts of the world with the most interest both in the effective functioning of the Council



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for delivering on its mandate and on playing the role of moderating, balancing and bridging the divisions in the UNSC.

Africa charging the momentum for UNSC resolution

With geopolitical tensions deepening and conflicts rising, the need and demand for the reform of the UN Security Council has not diminished. As in the past two years, UNSC reform featured in the speeches of the leaders of the majority of UN member states during the 80th UN General Assembly.¹ This echoes the message of the UN Secretary General's New Agenda for Peace that 'urgent progress is made in the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council to make this body more just and representative.'

Africa remains to be the region that is reinvigorating its push for the reform of the highest decision-making body in the UN. In pursuit of the advancement of its common position, Africa took steps to build on the [Pact for the Future](#). It is to be recalled that, going beyond the commitment to prioritise the redressing of the historical injustice against Africa and treating Africa as a special case, the Pact under Action 40 enunciates the commitment of the Member States of the UN to 'intensify efforts for the reform (of the UNSC) through the IGN.' As part of that effort, the Pact encourages further reform model discussion and proposes 'developing a consolidated model' as a pathway to future progress. The TICAD 9 Declaration also underscored the need to redress the historical injustice against Africa with regard to representation in the UNSC and reaffirmed 'support for full African representation...' in line with the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration. This approach echoes the recommendations of the High-Level Panel of Experts on Africa and the Reform of the Multilateral System, which calls for sustained, unified African engagement to ensure that ongoing global reform processes fully recognize and address the historical injustice faced by Africa in Security Council representation.

As a follow-up to the Pact for the Future and the initiative in the IGN process inviting the submission of the model that various groupings propose for the reform of the UNSC, the Committee of Ten of the African Union (AU) Assembly held consultations. The first consultation was held in Freetown, Sierra Leone. During the second consultation held in Lusaka, Zambia, the C10 adopted the proposed African model on the reform of the UNSC.

The Chairperson of the C10, President Bio, convened a high-level event on the sidelines of the 80th UN General Assembly, marking the 20th anniversary of the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. The occasion reaffirmed Africa's commitment to the Common Africa Position and for deepening the push for the reform of the UNSC. During Sierra Leon's Presidency of the UNSC in November 2025, a session dedicated to the reform of the UNSC was held. In an unprecedented move, the elected ten members of the UNSC (E10) presented a joint statement, which, among

¹ Some, for example the President of Finland, went as far as outlining the make-up of the UNSC.



others, demonstrated not only widespread support for UNSC reform but also a significant diplomatic win in support of Africa's common position as the E10 joint statement made explicit. During the 39th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, the AU model on the UNSC reform that the C10 developed was presented and adopted by the AU Assembly. Together with the high-level sustained mobilization by the C10 and the Africa Group, the adoption of the AU model marks a major advance in the journey towards the realization of UNSC reform and the Ezulwini consensus.

3rd Amani Africa and Japan high-level dialogue on the reform of the UNSC

Despite continuing interest of the majority of UN members and Africa's sustained engagement, the volatility in the global situation is not without consequences to the effort towards achieving UNSC reform in the context of the effort for resetting the multilateral system. In view of this, one of the issues for Africa and many Member States of the UN that support UNSC reform is how to keep the agenda alive and make it a major global policy concern in the face of the volatility and increasing fluidity of the global context. Related to this is also the question of whether and how UNSC reform can be pursued in isolation from the broader reform of the UN and the multilateral system writ large.

As part of Amani Africa's work on Africa and the changing global order and having regard to these questions, the foregoing background and the 2 previous editions of the joint Amani Africa-Japan forums, Amani Africa and Japan plan to convene the 3rd high-level dialogue on the reform of the UNSC.

Considering that this remains to be the only public forum for policy dialogue on UNSC reform in Addis Ababa and as the 3rd edition, this year's forum would provide an opportunity to reflect on what has been discussed in our last two dialogues, in 2024 and 2025, and would also showcase the momentum raised here in Addis toward the UNSC Reform. In reviewing developments around UNSC reform since the last dialogue, the forum also serves as an occasion to consider any policy alignment toward the UNSCR between Africa and other groupings.

Objective of the Dialogue

Against the background of the foregoing, the additional objectives of the dialogue include:

- a) Taking stock of the state of policy discourse and process on the UNSC reform since the Pact for the Future, including the progress towards what the Pact called 'a consensual model';
- b) Discussing challenges and opportunities in the quest for the reform of the UNSC, including with respect to the Ezulwini consensus and the Sirte Declaration, which marked its 20th anniversary;



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- c) Exploring pathways for achieving UNSC reform, including in efforts for wider reform of the UN and the multilateral system in general; and
- d) Identifying ways of building the momentum for UNSC reform, including through mobilizing support for the AU model on the reform of the UNSC based on the Ezulwini Consensus.

Methodology and format

The high-level dialogue will involve a moderated interactive discussion organized around high-level presentations from leading policy makers and experts who will provide updates and framing remarks. In addition to the substantive session/s, the high-level dialogue will have an opening and closing segment. The dialogue will be held in a hybrid format.

To maximize impact and make the forum much more interactive and candid, it is envisaged that discussions will be held under Chatham House rules.

Agenda

1:00 – 1:30 pm: Registration

1:30 -1:45 pm: Opening Segment

- Welcoming Remarks by Dr. Solomon Dersso, Founding Director, Amani Africa Media and Research Services
- Opening Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Noboru Sekiguchi, Ambassador of Japan to the AU

1:45 - 3:00 pm

Session I: Taking Stock of Developments in UNSC Reform Since the Last Policy Dialogue

Building on the renewed global attention to Security Council reform, the first session will examine the evolving political and institutional dynamics shaping the current phase of the reform agenda. In particular, the session will explore ongoing discussions and movements related to a possible review of the UN Charter, an issue that has re-emerged in the context of wider reform conversations, including initiatives aimed at adapting the UN system to contemporary geopolitical realities. It will also take stock of where matters currently stand from the perspective of the African Group, including its diplomatic engagement, the status of support for the Common African Position, and the strategic considerations shaping Africa's approach in the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform.



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Host / Moderator: Dr. Solomon Dersso

Panelists:

- **H.E Ambassador Bankole Adeoye**, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security
- **Dr. Korir Sing'Oei**, Principal Secretary, State Department for Foreign Affairs of Kenya
- **H.E. Ambassador Rebecca Amuge Otengo**, Permanent Representative of Uganda to the AU
- **H.E. Ambassador Churchill Ewumbue-Monono**, Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the AU

3:00 - 4:15 pm

Session II: Current state and next steps towards UNSC reform

The session will focus on reflecting on the progress made in developing concrete reform models for the composition and working methods of the United Nations Security Council. In particular, the session will examine how recent proposals have sought to move debates beyond general principles toward more structured options, including models aimed at expanding both permanent and non-permanent membership, improving regional representation, and addressing longstanding concerns regarding equity, legitimacy, and effectiveness. Against this backdrop, participants will assess the extent to which convergence is emerging around specific reform models, the key differences that remain among member states, and how stakeholders can strategically engage to shape viable, politically realistic pathways toward agreement on Council reform.

- What concrete developments have emerged recently within intergovernmental negotiations on UNSC reform? What are the main reform models currently under discussion regarding Council composition, including new membership categories and longer-term seats?
- Looking ahead, what opportunities exist for translating current momentum into tangible progress on Security Council reform?

Host/Moderator: Dr. Solomon Dersso

Panelists:

- **H.E. Ambassador Tareq Albanai**, Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the UN
- **H.E. Ambassador Michael Imran Kanu**, Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the UN in New York
- **Mr. Masaaki Saito**, Director of the United Nations Policy Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

4:15 – 4:30 pm: Closing